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AFRICAN BIRD CLUB

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African Bird Club

The African Bird Club aims to:

- provide a worldwide focus for African ornithology
- encourage an interest in the conservation of the birds of the region
- liaise with and promote the work of existing regional societies
- publish a twice-yearly colour bulletin
- encourage observers to visit lesser known areas of the region
- encourage observers to actively search for globally threatened and near-threatened species
- run the ABC Conservation Programme

Registered Charity No 1053920

ABC Membership

Membership is open to all. Annual subscription rates are:

Individual	Europe & Africa: UK£21	Rest of the World: UK£23
Family	Europe & Africa: UK£24	Rest of the World: UK£26
Student	Europe & Africa: UK£12	Rest of the World: UK£14
Supporting	UK£35 minimum	
Life	UK£500	

To join or for further details please visit the ABC website (where there are secure online payment facilities) or write to the Membership Secretary—see contact information below.

ABC Website

http://www.africanbirdclub.org

Photographers and artists

ABC is always looking for drawings and photos to publish in the Bulletin. If you are interested in contributing, please contact the Graphics Editor, Lionel Sineux, lionel.sineux@gmail.com

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The Bulletin of the African Bird Club

The Bulletin of the ABC provides a forum for news, letters, notices, recent publications, expedition results, reviews and publication of studies on African birds by contributors from throughout the world. Publication of results in the Bulletin of the ABC does not preclude publication of final results as journal papers either by the ABC or elsewhere. No material should, however, be submitted simultaneously to the Bulletin of the ABC and to any other publication.

Brief notes for contributors appear elsewhere in this Bulletin and further details are available from the Editor (editor@africanbirdclub.org).

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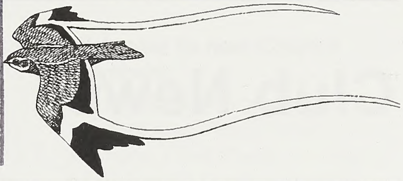

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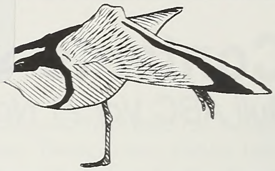
Club News



A 20th anniversary message from the Chairman

This is the 21st volume of the *ABC Bulletin*, and it is indeed published in the Club's 21st year of operation, but it was in April this year that the Club celebrated its 20th birthday. We were particularly fortunate that the Natural History Museum in London agreed to host the meeting in their excellent Flett Theatre. More than 130 people attended and enjoyed a highly varied range of talks summarised below.

It was particularly pleasing to see a large number of the Club's founder members at the meeting. In the last 20 years we have achieved a lot—far more than the founding committee could have ever envisaged. Apart from publishing the highly respected *Bulletin* and holding a series of entertaining and educative meetings, we have already supported 175 conservation projects in 33 African countries, and this year the total value of that support will approach £200,000, an incredible achievement for a comparatively small organisation. Much of that finance has been gifted by Club members who have chosen to support a particular project, but a considerable amount has also been raised through our sales operation, raffles and other fund-raising activities. Our grateful thanks go to all of those people for their contribution.

To mark the Club's 20th anniversary, ABC wants to do something very special that will not only acknowledge our milestone but will make a significant difference to the conservation of one particular species in Africa. Negotiations are currently underway and we hope to announce the details of an important land acquisition later in the year.

Finally, I have been privileged to act as the Club's Chairman in this anniversary year, but it is to my fellow Council members and their predecessors to whom I want to give the greatest thanks. Some of those people put together the plans for this Club and then ensured that those plans became a reality. Without their foresight and enthusiasm none of this would have happened—we owe them a great debt of gratitude.

Keith Betton

ABC 20th Anniversary Meeting—12 April 2014

Approximately 130 people including a number of founder members gathered in the Flett Theatre at London's Natural History Museum for the Club's 20th Anniversary meeting and a programme of seven talks.

The Club's founder Chairman Martin Woodcock got the main proceedings underway with a look back at how the Club had successfully met its objective of providing a focus for African ornithology. He also looked at the way technology, such as digital photography and the internet, had changed ornithology in the intervening years.

Achilles Byaruhanga, Executive Director of *Nature*Uganda and Chairman of BirdLife Africa, then gave an overview of the state of Africa's birds and their conservation. Despite more than 1,230 IBAs and the importance of birds in African culture, species are in decline as a result of multiple threats. Advocacy is one answer—there exist many good policies but no one is enforcing them—so politicians need information. Making the link between biodiversity and human well-being is another route. He ended with a proverb: "To move quickly move alone; to go far, move together" —but we need to move far and quickly!

In a talk illustrated with stunning pictures, Roger Safford gave an overview of the Malagasy region and examined the origins of its birdlife. He ended by pointing out that there is still a lot potentially waiting to be discovered. The region is also under threat, but as he quoted: "There are no hopeless cases, only expensive cases and people without hope". And expensive might not be that unaffordable.

To take us up to the lunch break, Jason Anderson (who spoke at last year's meeting on Rwanda's birds) gave a brief update concerning a project in Rwanda involving the establishment of a school bird club.

The after-lunch slot is always a difficult one to navigate, but Tim Birkhead's lively style and intriguing subject (the sex life of birds and their adaptations) kept everyone awake. It included a brief history of ornithology and ended with an example of the fallacy of emblematics—a 19th century vicar, Francis Morris, urging his flock to emulate 'the humble Dunnock' *Prunella modularis*—a bird we now know to be highly polygamous and to copulate as many as 100 times a day, which was probably not quite what the Revd. Morris was to trying to encourage!

David Pearson next gave an overview of the results of ringing at Ngulia, Kenya (see also Africa Round-up, pp. 134–135). Since 1969 the site's unique topography and weather has enabled ringers monitoring Palearctic migrants to ring nearly 400,000 birds. Over the years numbers have remained constant, but the species composition has changed. Marsh Warblers *Acrocephalus palustris* have increased from 30% to 50% of the birds trapped, while Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* and Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* numbers have declined.

David's talk was followed by Jim Reynolds, who described the threats to Ascension Island's population of Sooty Terns *Onychoprion fuscatus*. From a total of nearly three million birds in 1958, current numbers are estimated at around 380,000 and remain so despite the eradication of feral cats. The reason is probably because the removal of cats has permitted other invasive predators, such as rats and Common Mynahs *Acridotheres tristis* to flourish, and they are now taking their own toll on the terns.

The final presentation was by Frank Gardner, the BBC's Security Correspondent. He is a keen birder and his talk gave an insight into his exploits between assignments in the Middle East and North Africa, including his successful battle with Kenya Airways over wheelchair access to its flights. He even managed to set the audience an ID challenge.

Nigel Birch

AGM 2014 lectures now online

Talks from the ABC 20th Anniversary meeting are now available on Youtube:

- Keith Betton: Chairman's Introduction
  Martin Woodcock: From then to now—20 years of the African Bird Club
  Achilles Byaruhanga: The state of Africa's birds
  http://youtu.be/2ntt5qPFtC4
  http://youtu.be/QRCslI4mRlE
- Roger Safford: Birds of the Malagasy region
  Jason Anderson: Update on Rwanda birdwatching
  http://youtu.be/1fwMAo9rN_Y
- David Pearson: Results from four decades of intensive bird ringing at Ngulia, Kenya http://youtu.be/3o5bN61VKLc
- Jim Reynolds: 'Terning' back the clock: lessons from 20 years of fieldwork on Ascension Island http://youtu.be/gq7LBzXjX1c
- Frank Gardner: A BBC correspondent (and birder) at large in Africa http://youtu.be/wuo5jQe3lrw

Keith Betton

Next Annual General Meeting—Saturday 11 April 2015

We are delighted to announce that the next Annual General Meeting will once again be held in the Flett Theatre at the Natural History Museum, in London, on Saturday 11 April 2015. A full programme of talks will be announced in early 2015. We are also hoping to introduce occasional autumn meetings in other parts of the UK.

Thanks to outgoing Council Members

We are particularly grateful to Danaë Sheehan and John Caddick for their contributions to the Club. Danaë's experience in international bird conservation has proven invaluable and, in particular, she helped to liaise with our many Regional Representatives. John Caddick has served the Club in several roles—as Treasurer and Vice Chairman, but most of all as our Webmaster. In the latter role he has completely rejuvenated our website and developed a vast resource of information covering *c.*1,500 pages! We thank them both.

Honorary Life Membership for Alan Williams and John Caddick

Last year we thanked Alan Williams for his long period on the Council, particularly as Treasurer and Membership Secretary. This year we thanked John Caddick for a very similar contribution (see above)—each has spent more than ten years on ABC Council. There are many people who help the Club, but very few who have given up to 30 hours per week to keep it operational. However, Alan and John have done just that. The Club has only awarded honorary Life Membership once before—to Bill Quantrill—but Council was unanimous in deciding it was the least we could do to award the same to Alan and John, and this decision was announced during the 2014 AGM.

Welcome to new Council Members

We are particularly pleased to welcome seven new Council Members. Chris Magin returns as a full Council Member (having been co-opted for one year due to our four-year rule). Chris has continued to act as our Conservation Officer during this time, and will remain in that role. Phil Hyde joins as Secretary, Carolyn Hall as Membership Secretary, and Nigel Birch will oversee our Regional Representatives programme. We are particularly pleased that two members based in Africa have agreed to join Council. They are Bruktawit Abdu of Ethiopia and Tiwonge Gawa of Malaŵi. Much of our decision-making is made via e-mail discussion, but both of them are also planning to attend at least one Council Meeting per year. Finally, we are also delighted that Chris Spooner has agreed to join Council. During the next few months he will succeed Stephen Pringle as Treasurer.

ABC 2014 Conservation Tours to South Africa

There are still a few places on the forthcoming ABC tours to South Africa. Thanks to a generous profit share with Birding Ecotours (an ABC Gold Sponsor), these trips will make an important contribution to our Conservation Fund. The tours are running consecutively, so they can be booked as a whole or individually. Between 11 and 18 October 2014 is a Western Cape Birding Adventure—this will include a pelagic trip, Cape Floral and Karoo habitats. A subtropical South Africa tour will follow directly on, from 18 October until 2 November 2014, with the opportunity to observe in excess of 400 species across eastern parts of South Africa. If you are contemplating a first-class birding trip to Africa in 2014, you could do no better than consider taking both of these tours. Further details can be found at http://www.birdingecotours.co.za/

The ABC AGM, London, April 2014 / L'Assemblée générale annuelle de l'ABC, Londres, avril 2014:

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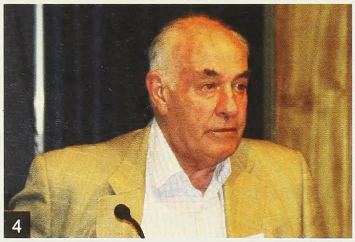
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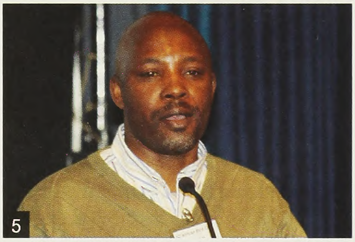
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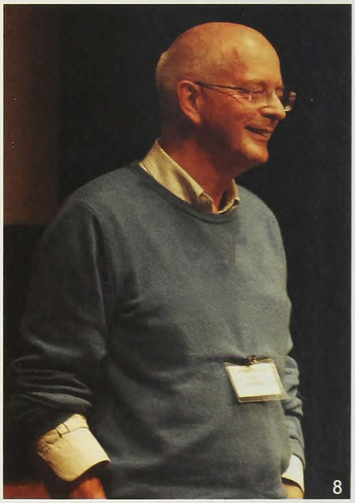
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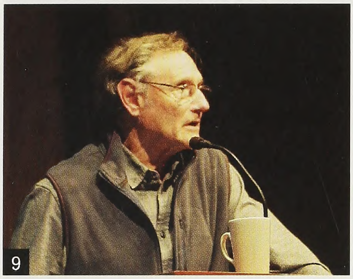
(1) Keith Betton, ABC Chairman / président de l'ABC; **(2)** Assembled members / L'assemblée; **(3)** Some ABC founder members / Quelques membres fondateurs; **(4)** Martin Woodcock, ABC Vice President / vice-président de l'ABC; **(5)** Achilles Byurahanga, *Nature*Uganda; **(6)** Roger Safford, BirdLife International; **(7)** Jason Anderson; **(8)** Tim Birkhead, Sheffield University (all photographs Nigel Birch)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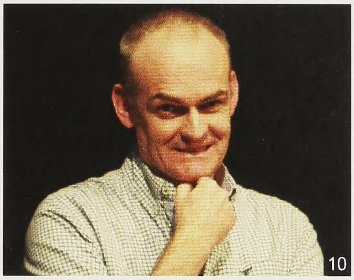
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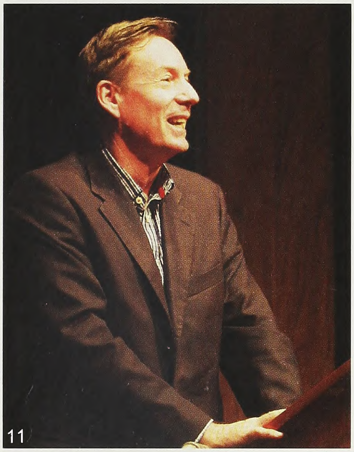
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(9) David Pearson; **(10)** Jim Reynolds; **(11)** Frank Gardner, BBC; **(12)** Keith Betton, ABC Chairman, receives a donation from Duncan MacDonald, WildSounds / Keith Betton, président de l'ABC, reçoit une donation de Duncan MacDonald, WildSounds; **(13)** Richard Charles, incoming ABC Vice Chairman, Keith Betton, ABC Chairman and Tasso Leventis, ABC President / Richard Charles, nouveau vice-président de l'ABC, Keith Betton, président de l'ABC, et Tasso Leventis, directeur de l'ABC; **(14)** Busy sales area / Les stands suscitaient beaucoup d'intérêt; **(15)** Roger Safford signing a copy of *Birds of Africa* Vol. 8 / Roger Safford signant un exemplaire de *Birds of Africa* Vol. 8; **(16)** Tony Wood, President BirdLife Zimbabwe, with Tasso Leventis, ABC President / Tony Wood, président de BirdLife Zimbabwe, avec Tasso Leventis, directeur de l'ABC (all photographs Nigel Birch)

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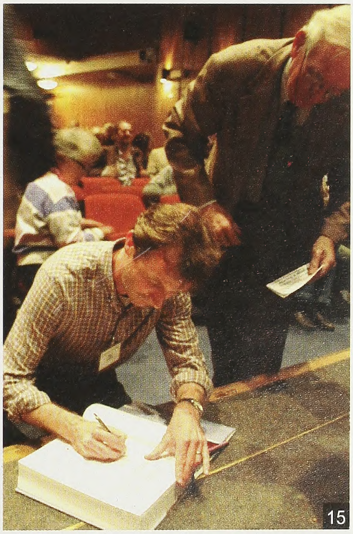
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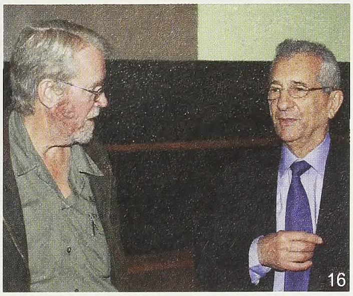
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African Bird Club *Conservation Fund*

New Awards—February 2014

The Conservation Committee reviewed 29 proposals ahead of the February 2014 Council meeting and recommended seven for funding. Following the meeting on 15 February 2014, ABC Council agreed to fund all seven projects totalling U£10,792, for which ABC secured UK£4,919 from sponsors. Brief details of the successful proposals are given below.

Guide to the birds of Takamanda National Park, Cameroon

Located in the Southwest Region of Cameroon, Takamanda National Park constitutes part of the Guineo-Congolian forests that are characterised by an exceptional biological diversity. It is home to 15 large mammal species (including eight primates), >950 species of plants and some 313 species of birds. These include White-throated Mountain Babbler *Kupeornis gilberti* (Endangered), Yellow-casqued Hornbill *Ceratogymna elata*, Grey-necked Picathartes *Picathartes oreas* and Bannerman's Weaver *Ploceus bannermani* (all Vulnerable), Cameroon Montane Greenbul *Andropadus montanus*, Crossley's Ground Thrush *Zoothera crossleyi*, Bangwa Forest Warbler *Bradypterus bangwaensis* and White-tailed Warbler *Poliolais lopezi* (all Near Threatened), as well as Hartlaub's Duck *Pteronetta hartlaubii*. Yvonne Nso Takangeyong, of the Environmental Governance Institute, Cameroon, received UK£1,500, generously sponsored by Tasso Leventis, to make the birds of Takamanda better known by developing a guide for use by school eco-clubs in the area and beyond. Moreover, the project will contribute to raising awareness about habitat destruction / fragmentation and ecosystem conservation.

Red-shouldered Vanga in south-west Madagascar

Sama Zefania was awarded UK£1,493 to support research into the population and distribution of the Red-shouldered Vanga *Calicalicus rufocarpalis* (Vulnerable), a species confined to spiny forest near Toliara. The project aims to document any changes in the species' range by obtaining updated records of individual presence. The work will serve as a follow-up to Sama's previous research around Tsimanampetsotsa National Park, in 2010–11 (summarised in *Bull. ABC* 21: 12), which was also funded by ABC. Sama will also estimate population size based on density and total areas of suitable habitat, analyse threats to the species, and estimate the percentage of protected and unprotected areas within the species' range in order to inform future conservation actions.

Influence of climate on two Ethiopian endemics

Andrew Bladon of the University of Cambridge, UK, received a UK£2,000 Expedition Award to investigate the effects of climate—particularly temperature—on species ranges. The restricted ranges of Ethiopian Bush Crow *Zavattariornis stresemanni* (Endangered) and White-tailed Swallow *Hirundo megaensis* (Vulnerable) represent both an ecological enigma and a conservation priority. The project will involve working closely with the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society (EWNHS—the BirdLife Partner), and aims to

Yellow-casqued Hornbill / Calao à casque jaune
Ceratogymna elata (Lionel Sineux)

Ethiopian Bush Crow / Corbin de Stresemann
Zavattariornis stresemanni (Paul F. Donald)

White-tailed Swallow / Hirondelle à queue blanche *Hirundo megaensis* (Paul F. Donald)

Mauritius Cuckooshrike / Échenilleur de Maurice *Coracina typica* (Jacques de Spéville)

establish the effects of temperature on nesting success by finding and monitoring 15–20 nests of each species. Temperature loggers will be deployed inside or near the nests to record daily temperature regimes throughout the nesting period. Clutch size, survival rate and nestling provisioning rates will be monitored at each nest. GPS tags will be attached to White-tailed Swallow adults to record foraging behaviour, which will be compared with ambient temperature patterns. Caroline Ash, daughter of John Ash (co-author of *The Birds of Ethiopia and Eritrea*), requested that UK£2,000 of her father's bequest to ABC be used to fund this project.

Reintroduction of Mauritian endemics to Ferney Valley

As part of a Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF) project to restore populations of native passerines, it is seeking to reintroduce birds into suitable areas to support long-term viable populations. Nicolas Zuël and Nik Cole of MWF were awarded UK£919, kindly sponsored by Tasso Leventis, to assess the Ferney Valley, within the Bambous Mountains of south-east Mauritius, as a potential re-introduction site for the endemic Mauritius Cuckooshrike *Coracina typica* (Vulnerable) and the distinctive Mauritius race of the Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone (bourbonnensis) desolata*, which may also satisfy criteria for Vulnerable status. The project will focus on habitat structure, floral composition and food availability (flying insects for the flycatcher and large aboreal insects and geckos *Phelsuma* spp. for the cuckooshrike) and presence of introduced mammalian predators. If the Ferney Valley is deemed suitable, MWF will prepare a re-introduction plan, and potentially undertake a trial translocation of birds in 2014/15.

Madagascar Sacred Ibis survey

Unlike its widespread mainland African congener, Madagascar Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis bernieri* (Endangered) has an extremely restricted distribution, occurring only on the west coast of Madagascar. Sylviane Volampeno of the Mikajy Natiora Association was awarded UK£1,500 to conduct a population status and distributional survey of the species in Sahamalaza-Îles Radama National Park. The project will also propose conservation measures for the species and its habitat, combining ecological research and local community involvement.

Uaso Narok Forest Reserve survey

Amina Njoki of Nyahururu Bird Club was awarded UK£1,380 to support an avifaunal survey of Uaso Narok Forest Reserve in West Laikipia District, Laikipia County, Kenya, just north-east of Nyahururu on the eastern escarpment of the Great Rift Valley and within the Kenya Mountains Endemic Bird Area. At 1,973 ha it is the smallest of the five constituent forests forming the larger Marmanet Forest. The survey will assess and document bird species diversity and composition of the reserve; their conservation in the reserve and surrounding areas; assess current and potential threats of the forest; and record any observations of other fauna of conservation importance. Paul Bristow generously provided UK£500 sponsorship towards this award.

Tracking Nightingales to West Africa

Since February 2008, ABC has held approximately UK£1,800 that was transferred to it from the winding up of the Tanji Birders Club. It has always been the Club's intention to use this money for a project in some way connected to The Gambia. In 2012 the

British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) initiated a highly successful tracking programme, using geolocators, on Nightingales *Luscinia megarhynchos* at Grafham Water (Cambridgeshire), the Fens (Norfolk) and Orlestone Forest (Kent). This resulted in the retrieval of 13 of 20 geolocators deployed in 2013, far in excess of expectations and in fact an even higher return rate than for control birds marked with rings. Preliminary results have provided information that may prove vital in attempts to understand the decline of the UK population of the species, and demonstrated that all of the birds wintered in far western Africa, in Senegambia and Guinea-Bissau, with a minority making a mid to late winter movement further south-east, as did the single bird tracked previously in 2009–10. The Senegambia seems to support the majority of the UK wintering population of Nightingales. Chris Hewson of the BTO submitted a proposal to ABC and was awarded UK£2,000 to fund five tags for field work on nightingales, as a means of using the Tanji Birders funds on a project connected with The Gambia. Geolocators have been the mainstay of tracking small birds, but BTO will be trialling some new 1-g GPS devices that are orders of magnitude more accurate than geolocators (+/- 20 m vs. 150,000 m!). These should revolutionise the tracking of small birds.

New Awards—June 2014

In the June 2014 funding round, ABC received 26 proposals for Conservation Awards (which have been increased to a max. of UK£2,000) and six proposals for Expedition Awards (also increased, to a max. of UK£3,000). New standardised application forms are available via the ABC website. On 7 June Council approved five of these totalling UK£11,055. Outlines of the successful projects are presented below.

Aquatic Warbler monitoring in the Ndiaël Basin, Senegal

Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* (Vulnerable) is the rarest and only globally threatened passerine breeding in mainland Europe. The species spends 5–7 months annually on its non-breeding grounds in the African continent and on migration. Aquatic Warbler wintering habitats, mainly natural wetlands in sub-Saharan West Africa, are disappearing throughout the Sahel due to land-use changes. One of the major current wetland restoration initiatives is the 'Living Ndiaël' project in north-west Senegal, which is aiming to re-wet the Ndiael Basin and restore its biodiversity. The area encompasses habitats potentially crucial for Aquatic Warblers. Cosima Tegetmeyer of the University of Greifswald in Germany received an Expedition Award of UK£2,960, generously sponsored by Tasso Leventis, to conduct a survey to establish the species' presence and evaluate the suitability of restored habitats in the Ndiaël Basin based on known habitat characteristics in the nearby wintering habitats in Djoudj National Park. The project will also train local staff in charge of ecological monitoring to enable them to identify Aquatic Warblers in the field.

Survey of Loza Bay, north-west Madagascar

Felix Razafindrajao of the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust received a Conservation Award of UK£1,970 for surveys of Loza Bay, which is suspected to support significant populations of four globally threatened endemics: Madagascar Teal *Anas bernieri*, Madagascar Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis bernieri* and Humblot's Heron *Ardea humbloti* (all Endangered), as well as Madagascar Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vociferoides* (Critically Endangered). Loza Bay comprises a variety of habitats: open bay and islets, mangroves and dry forest, mud and saltpans, small lakes, and tidal lagoons. The project aims to assess avian populations and the

Madagascar Sacred Ibis / Ibis sacré de Madagascar *Threskiornis bernieri* (Ian Fulton)

Humblot's Heron / Héron de Humblot *Ardea humbloti* (Keith Valentine) biodiversity importance of Loza Bay through direct and questionnaire surveys; contribute to the enhancement of public awareness of the importance of biodiversity conservation in this part of Madagascar; and contribute to the development of a strategic plan to ensure the site's conservation.

Conservation, ecology and genetics of the Cape Verde Warbler

Helena Reis Batalha, of the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK, received a UK£3,000 Expedition Award to study Cape Verde Warbler *Acrocephalus brevipennis* (Endangered) a passerine endemic to the Cape Verde archipelago, where it is believed to be confined to just three islands. There is a critical lack of information on the species, with its precise distribution, population density and population trends all being unknown. The bird's habitat and conservation threats appear to differ between islands. Additionally, the phylogenetic relationship between the different populations, on islands relatively distant from one another, has not been assessed. Genetic data, combined with ecological, behavioural and morphometric analyses, are necessary to determine their taxonomic status. Between November 2013 and January 2014, during a previous expedition also funded by ABC, Helena took DNA samples from 95 birds on Santiago, Fogo and São Nicolau. Her team is now assessing how genetically divergent and viable these populations are. However, without an assessment of these data in combination with ecological factors, it is not possible to fully understand the forces driving population divergence. Furthermore, any conservation plan would be incomplete without behavioural and habitat information, and thus risk failure. The new expedition to Cape Verde will undertake a thorough habitat survey, behavioural assessment and population census, and explore the possibility of the species' existence on other islands e.g. Santo Antão, where unconfirmed sightings have been reported from areas with potentially suitable habitat.

Sewage and birds in Sudan

Marwa Taha Elhaj Adam of Bahri University, Khartoum, received a Conservation Award of UK£1,575 for a study into the impact of sewage habitats on the range expansion of bird species along the Nile in northern Sudan. There are many recent examples of bird populations expanding into the ranges of related species, leading to competition for resources (e.g. the invasive Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* expanding into the range of the native White-headed Duck *O. leucocephala* in Western Europe). The Sahara Desert separates two major biogeographical regions and has acted to separate many related species. Human development along the Nile may be providing a route by which species can cross between two biogeographical regions. The avifauna along the Nile in northern Sudan has never been thoroughly studied, so the current work will aim to quantify the extent to which birds have expanded their ranges in recent years (with particular reference to sewage habitats) and provide a baseline on which future population change can be assessed. Keith Betton and Richard Charles kindly provided UK£500 each towards this award.

Ruddy Duck / Erismature rousse *Oxyura jamaicensis* (John Caddick)

Guide and guard training in Senegal

John Rose, the UK representative of the Groupement d'Intérêt économique of the guides of Niokolo-Koba National Park (GIE NIOKOLO) in Senegal, received a UK£1,550 Conservation Award to operate a training workshop in ornithology for the eco-guides and guards of this park. The one-week course for 15 trainees—ten eco-guides and five park guards—will be conducted by a Senegalese ornithologist specialised in training and an expert from the Directorate of National Parks of the Ministry of Environment and Protection of Nature. The training workshop will cover an introduction to ornithology, avian ecology, bird identification, bird surveys and monitoring techniques, data management and the compilation of reports. The workshop will enable guides to apply their new knowledge during the next tourist season between November 2014 and May 2015. Paul Bristow has kindly offered to sponsor half of this award (UK£775).

Dr Chris Magin, Conservation Officer
on behalf of the Conservation Committee

The ABC website (http://www.africanbirdclub.org/conservation-fund-past-projects) shows the full list of conservation projects and awards made since the inception of the programme over a decade ago. A remarkable total in excess of UK£190,000 has been donated during this period. You can also view many of the final project reports—including full versions of those summarised above—by clicking on the hyperlinks on the webpage.

Africa Round-up

Compiled by Ron Demey, Guy M. Kirwan and Peter Lack

General

Seabirds off the hook?

As is now well known, many thousands of seabirds are killed accidentally in demersal trawl fisheries through cable interactions and net entanglements across the world. However, multi-year datasets for robustly estimating seabird–trawl interactions are scarce. In 2004–05, an estimated 15,500 (7,000–26,000) seabirds were killed per year due to cable strikes in the South African deep-water hake *Merluccius* sp. trawl fishery, most of them albatrosses, although a reanalysis of the same data now suggests that those estimates should be reduced by *c.*40% for all species including albatrosses. Even better news is that data collected between 2006 and 2010, when vessels were using bird-scaring lines in an effort to reduce seabird mortality, reveal that over 64 trips and 690 hours of observation, just 41 seabirds were confirmed to have been killed due to cable strikes, of which 22% were albatrosses. The research, published in *Animal Conservation*, found that fatal cable interactions overwhelmingly occur when vessels discard offal, with the highest rates of mortality in winter and during setting. Bird-scaring lines appear to have resulted in 73–95% lower mortality for the winter/discard strata. Estimated total mortality in this fishery in 2010 was 990 (range 556–1,633) seabirds, including 83 (38–166) albatrosses, a reduction in mean albatross deaths of >95%, reflecting both bird-scaring line effectiveness (accounting for >90%) and annual fishing effort reduced by 50% from 2004–2005 to 2010. Bird-scaring lines cost <US$200 each in South Africa, i.e. a trivial expense per vessel, thus in combination with their apparent effectiveness, providing a strong case for their mandatory adoption in trawl fisheries attended by high densities of scavenging seabirds.

Source: Anim. Conserv. *DOI: 10.1111/acv.12126;* World Birdwatch *36(2), pp. 22–23*

African Darter / Anhinga d'Afrique *Anhinga rufa* (Hugh Chittenden)

Flight feather moult in darters

Contrary to their close relatives, the cormorants, darters have a flightless moult. This was only discovered in the early 20th century and there is still little information on the birds' flight feather moult. Peter Ryan used field observations and photographs to confirm that all remiges are normally replaced synchronously, but not all rectrices. Possibly at least some rectrices are retained year-round because they are needed for controlling body angle and depth while diving. A few birds appeared not to replace all remiges at once. These individuals were also incapable of flight and the reason for this aberrant moult pattern is unclear.

Source: Ardea *101, pp. 177–180*

Growth and development of African Swallow-tailed Kites

A study by Wim Mullié and co-workers at nest and roost sites of African Swallow-tailed Kites *Chelictinia riocourii* in Senegal and Cameroon has produced the first detailed description of nestling growth, development, juvenile plumage and post-juvenile moult. There was no difference between the sexes in nestling growth patterns. Differences in pre-fledging body mass related to hatching order were not significant for first and second hatchlings, but third hatchlings were noticeably smaller than older siblings and none survived to fledging. Young underwent a post-juvenile moult in the first 3–6 months after fledging; this was more extensive than in most other raptors but comparable to that described for the closely related *Elanus* kites. During this period, eye colour changes from brown to orange to red, the last typically attained within the first year. After the first complete moult at *c.*1 year of age, birds acquire the black carpal patch on the underwing, typical of adult plumage.

Source: Malimbus *36, pp. 1–12*

Nest predation higher inside forest fragments than at edges

Contrary to most perceived wisdom, Toon Spanhove *et al.* have found that predation on nests of Cabanis's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus cabanisi* is much higher in the interior of forest fragments than at their edges. However the predation rate did decrease during the course of the breeding season and was

Cabanis's Greenbul / Bulbul de Cabanis *Phyllastrephus cabanisi* (Dave Richards) overall very variable in both space and time. Are 'classic edge effects' rarer in Afrotropical forests than elsewhere? Clearly several underlying mechanisms interact and species with fixed nesting strategies could have variable, even opposing, fitness between years.

Source: J. Ornithol. *155, pp. 411–420*

An environmentally friendly means of controlling Red-billed Queleas?

Over the years, various methods have been used to try to control Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* populations, including organophosphate spraying and even explosives. However, these and others have some considerable negative side-effects on other birds and, of course, the environment generally. Clive Elliott *et al.* have reported on a trial of mass-capture of the birds, to be used as food for local people. They tried various traditional methods of catching the birds (e.g. funnel traps) but locally made mist-nets proved the most effective. Trials found that after a few days those parts of colonies that had been subject to mist-netting were abandoned, and the local population was usually reported as being reduced (e.g., farmers reporting less crop-raiding). In addition, non-target captures were few and any birds that were caught could be released. Some refinements are still needed, but in principle this is a viable alternative to previous methods and much less damaging to the overall environment.

Source: Ostrich *85, pp. 31–37*

Red-billed Quelea / Travailleur à bec rouge *Quelea quelea* (Dave Richards)

World's rarest gorilla gains new roadmap for survival

Despite the continued twin threats of poaching and habitat destruction, future prospects for the world's rarest gorilla, Western (Cross River) Gorilla *Gorilla gorilla diehli* of south-east Nigeria and western Cameroon, have improved but are still dependent on continued local and international partnerships, according to a new action plan published by the IUCN SSC Primate Specialist Group and the Wildlife Conservation Society, and produced in partnership with the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the North Carolina Zoo, and others. The *Revised Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of the Cross River Gorilla: 2014–2019* cites a number of conservation achievements over the past several years, recommends measures designed to help Cross River gorillas increase their numbers within and beyond core sites, and emphasises the importance of local and international support for the success of conservation efforts.

Source: IUCN SSC Species e-bulletin *April 2014*

North Africa

Morocco's Osprey population is decreasing

A thorough survey of the Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* population in Al Hoceima National Park, on Morocco's northern coast, was undertaken in 2012 and 2013. The results suggest that the population has decreased from 14–16 pairs in the 1980s, when it was discovered, to just six breeding pairs and nine territorial pairs in 2012–13. The main identified threats to Osprey habitats include illegal dynamite and poison fishing. Coastal development plans, urbanisation and increasing tourism pressure are also seriously threatening the natural resources of the area, which is considered one of the most biodiverse in the Mediterranean. The overall Mediterranean Osprey population currently numbers fewer than 80 pairs.

Source: Ostrich *84, pp. 199–204*

White-rumped Sandpiper / Bécasseau de Bonaparte *Calidris fuscicollis* (Adam Riley)

First White-rumped Sandpiper for Tunisia

An adult White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* photographed on 30 September 2008 at a small freshwater lake at Ghidma oasis, Kébili, in the Douz region of southern Tunisia, was the first for Tunisia and only the second for the Maghreb. The first was one at Barrage Idriss, Morocco, in September 1999 (Thévenot *et al.* 2003. *The Birds of Morocco*), whilst another was photographed on 29 April 2012 at Tafilalt, Merzouga, Morocco, where it remained until at least 3 May (*Bull. ABC* 19: 229). At Ghidma oasis, ten other wader species were also present, as well as 50 Marbled Teals *Marmaronetta angustirostris*.

Source: Alauda *82, pp. 73–75*

Breeding of Saunders's Tern in Egypt documented

In July 2012, Mohamed Habib visited a sandbar on the Red Sea coast south of Ras Sudr, south Sinai, and discovered several Saunders's Terns *Sternula saundersi* and two nests with eggs. He revisited the site on 25 July 2013 with some European birders and found at least 45–50 adult terns, two fully fledged juveniles and a nestling (*cf. Bull. ABC* 21: 99). These records, representing the first breeding by Saunders's Tern in Egypt (and probably the westernmost ever), have now been documented in a short paper illustrated with several photographs. Although there is no immediate threat to the colony, conservation measures need to be taken, as hotel complexes have been established nearby and kite surfing occurs. Anyone interested in visiting Ras Sudr should contact Mohamed Habib at mrhydro35@hotmail.com to arrange access.

Source: Dutch Birding *36, pp. 20–24*

Large colony of Common Terns discovered in Egypt

The discoverer of the Saunders's Tern colony (see above) also found Common Terns *Sterna hirundo* feeding fledglings in the Port Said area in August 2012. He returned in May 2013 and counted 273 adult terns and an estimated 270 nests, the majority of them attended by a single adult. This is a significant discovery, as the only previous breeding record of Common Tern in the country dates from May 1990, when at least five pairs were found at Al Mahala, just east of Port Said.

Source: Dutch Birding *36, pp. 25–26*

Atlantic Ocean islands

Yellow-browed Warbler influx on Lanzarote, Canary Islands, in 2013–14

Since 2001, 1–2 vagrant Yellow-browed Warblers *Phylloscopus inornatus* have been recorded almost annually on Lanzarote, Canary Islands. In autumn / winter 2013–14, however, at least 29 were present, mainly in the east of the island. One had been ringed in Germany. These numbers exceed the total of all previous records. Unprecedented numbers were also observed on Tenerife and Fuerteventura, as well as on the Iberian Peninsula in October 2013, and in Morocco in November (*cf. Bull. ABC* 21: 97–104).

Source: http://www.reservoirbirds.com/Articles/RBAR_000013.pdf

West and Central Africa

Bakossi Forest IBA, Cameroon, under threat

ABC and BirdLife International are concerned that one of the most biodiverse forests in Cameroon is threatened by road construction. This comes after a group of birders visiting the forest in February 2014 to search for the Endangered Mount Kupe Bushshrike *Telophorus kupeensis*, which is endemic to Cameroon, found bulldozers knocking down trees and clearing scrub. ABC Chairman Keith Betton was one of the group members and took photographs of the destruction in order to immediately alert the international birding community via social media.

Bakossi National Park is not only a site of great natural beauty but a globally important site for biodiversity conservation, having been identified as an Important Bird Area in 2001. The park supports more than 200 species of plants, amphibians and birds found nowhere else on Earth, and is therefore categorised as an Alliance for Zero Extinction site. The Bakossi Forest Reserve was gazetted as a national park in 2008, but the decision by the government of Cameroon to construct a 15 m-wide road now threatens to roll back any conservation gains. Proponents claim that it will facilitate cultivation of cocoa and enable villagers to reach administrative offices to the north-east. However, BirdLife is concerned that such a wide road will permit much larger vehicles to transit the park and is likely to lead to increased frequency of illegal logging and bushmeat trade.It is already clear that the road is cutting through sensitive bird habitat.These impacts will result in increased management costs to the government and threaten the growing tourist industry in the area.

BirdLife has called for a temporary stop to road construction within the national park, to permit a participatory Environmental and Social Impact Assessment to be undertaken and presented for public scrutiny. While there are claims that the road will only be 15 m wide, in places it is almost 50 m wide where bulldozers have cut the vegetation. Furthermore,the steepness of the terrain is such that ordinary passenger vehicles would probably not be able to use the road. Some observers have predicted that local people will still have to walk.

Source: Keith Betton in litt. *July 2014*

Ortolan Buntings in West Africa

Data on Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* in West Africa are scarce. A very useful review of published and unpublished records of this long-distance migrant, which breeds in Europe and winters in sub-Saharan Africa north of 5°C, by Marco Thoma and Myles Menz, has been published in the latest issue of *Malimbus*. Most records are from Mauritania, where the species is a regular passage migrant in autumn, particularly on the coast, peaking in the first ten days of October, whilst spring migration is much less marked and observations in winter are rare. Approximately 40 records from 11 other countries are listed, mostly in November–March. Observations south of 16°C before mid November and south of 12°C prior to December are rare. The authors conclude that the core wintering areas probably are located in highland grasslands, especially those of the Fouta Djallon Massif in Guinea, the Tingi and Loma Mountains in Sierra Leone, and the Mount Nimba region in Guinea / Liberia. A few winter records from further north may indicate that Ortolan Buntings also overwinter in lowland savanna habitats.

Source: Malimbus *36, pp. 13–31*

Four additions to the Togo list

Robert Cheke and Ignasi Oliveiras document four new species for Togo, of which no fewer than three are the result of satellite-tracking studies: Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* (one satellite-tracked in December 2012; *cf. Bull. ABC* 20: 12), Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonorae* (one satellite-tracked in late October / early November 2004, *cf. Bull. ABC* 16: 14; with another in autumn 2010; this species is already mentioned by the ABC checklist for Togo), European Roller *Coracias*

European Roller / Rollier d'Europe *Coracias garrulus* (Werner Suter)

garrulus (two satellite-tracked in late March 2013) and White-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis albirostris.*

Source: Malimbus *36, pp. 58–60*

Yellow-breasted Boubou needs riparian fragments

A study into the habitat requirements of Yellow-breasted Boubou *Laniarius atroflavus* in and around Ngel Nyaki Forest Reserve, on the Mambilla Plateau, eastern Nigeria, found that the species preferred riparian forest fragments over disturbed forest edge, whilst no territories were found within the forest interior. The species is a sedentary, territorial resident restricted to the montane forests of south-eastern Nigeria and western Cameroon at 700–2,900 m. The study's findings identify Yellow-breasted Boubou as a potential flagship species to support efforts to protect degraded and relatively species-poor riparian fragments across the Nigerian–Cameroon mountains, before the habitat and the species that depend on it are lost, due to ongoing illegal cattle grazing, bush burning, wood collection and encroachment.

Source: Malimbus *36, pp. 47–57*

Yellow-breasted Boubou / Gonolek à ventre jaune *Laniarius atroflavus* (Nik Borrow)

Birds of Luki Forest and other observations from Bas-Congo, DR Congo

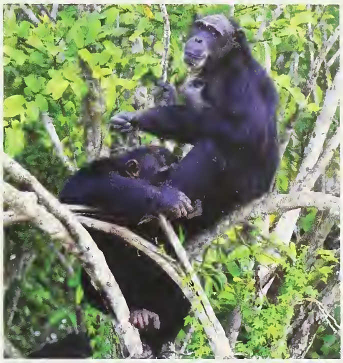
A list of birds observed in Luki Forest Reserve, an Important Bird Area in Bas-Congo Province, Democratic Republic of Congo, has been compiled by Sandy Ayer and co-workers. The list comprises 88 species, including 52 of the 136 considered likely to occur by Demey & Louette (2001. Democratic Republic of Congo. *In* Fishpool, L. D. C & Evans, M. I. (eds.) *Important Bird Areas in Africa and Associated Islands*). One of these is new for the country: Blackcap Illadopsis *Illadopsis cleaveri.* The rarely observed Black-eared Ground Thrush *Zoothera camaronensis* was also seen and is the southernmost record of this species. New distributional and breeding records, made in Parc Marin des Mangroves, near Muanda, and at Boma, in the same province, are also presented, among which Western Reef Egret *Egretta gularis* is, surprisingly, another first for DRC. The first definite breeding record for the country of Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis* is also documented.

Source: Malimbus *36, pp. 32–46*

Liberia: a stronghold for Western Chimpanzees—for now

The first nationwide survey in Liberia to estimate the abundance of Western Chimpanzees *Pan troglodytes verus*, conducted in 2010–12, found *c.*7,000 animals, the second-largest population in West Africa and potentially one of the most viable. The majority of chimps and some of the most species-diverse mammal communities in the country occur outside protected areas and are threatened by widespread hunting and plans for large-scale exploitation of natural resources. Implementation of effective strategies to ensure the protection of one of West Africa's last strongholds for Chimpanzees and other rare and threatened mammals and birds is urgently required.

Source: Oryx, *online April 2014, doi:10.1017/S0030605313001191*



Chimpanzees / Chimpanzés *Pan troglodytes verus* (Lionel Sineux)

Huge Chimpanzee population discovered in remote Congo forest

The remote Bili-Uele forest in the northern Democratic Republic of Congo, north of Kisangani and on the border with the Central African Republic, has recently been discovered to support a population of many thousands of Chimpanzees *Pan troglodytes.* Researchers believe the group, which is probably the largest in Africa, is one of the last thriving chimp 'mega-cultures'. The unusually large chimps have been observed feasting on a Leopard *Panthera pardus* and build ground nests far more frequently than other chimps, as well as having a unique predilection for giant African snails, whose shells they pound open on rocks or logs. Two dozen camera traps operated in the forest for eight months (which were nearly lost when poachers invaded the area and burned the researchers' camp) also recorded gangs of males patrolling their territory and mothers teaching their young how to use tools to eat swarming insects. While chimp numbers have apparently remained stable, numbers of Forest Elephants *Loxodonta cyclotis* have crashed by 50% due to poaching. The security situation is getting worse, as the

Lord's Resistance Army are using the area, and refugees and armed gangs from the Central African Republic have established bases in the region. It is feared that these increasing incursions will draw in more hunters seeking to feed the enormous bushmeat trade in the Congo basin, which targets chimps and other animals. The forest and its wildlife are currently completely unprotected.

Source: http://blog.africageographic.com/africa-geographic-blog/conservation/huge-chimpanzee-population-thriving-in-remote-congo-forest/

East Africa

Lake Natron under threat again

We last reported the ongoing saga of attempts to commence soda ash mining at Lake Natron, northern Tanzania, in *Bull. ABC* 19: 14. Most recently, the Tanzanian National Development Corporation's (NDC) Acting Managing Director, a government official, has been quoted as saying that two separate factories (at Natron and in the Engaruka basin) will produce 1.5 million tonnes of soda ash per year. Additional benefits are suggested to be employment for more than 1,000 people and a net income of US$480 million; NDC stated that it was seeking partners to take up the investment, which will be preceded by a land use plan. Conservation organisations are especially concerned by the assertion made by NDC that research has shown that 'mining of soda ash will not have any negative impacts on the breeding of Lesser Flamingos *Phoeniconais minor*' and the environment. They have further stated that the Lake Natron factory will be built at least 10 km from the lake 'to avoid disrupting the flamingos.'

One report quotes a highly placed source saying Tanzania may go ahead without fear at Lake Natron, because 'Kenya to the north is already mining soda ash at another shallow salt lake, Lake Magadi that is still frequented by flamingos.' However, it is not the case that the two sites are directly comparable. In response, Festo Semanini, the Head of the BirdLife International Office in Tanzania, said: "Mining of soda ash from Lake Natron would be the greatest ecological mistake Tanzania has ever committed".

The new call for fast tracking of soda ash mining comes at a time when Lake Natron has drawn the attention of the UN tourism body, the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), which has included the site in a global ecotourism project—Destination Flyways—covering eight countries. Lake Natron is one of just three such sites selected in Africa. A delegation from UNWTO visited Lake Natron and was impressed with the tourism potential, and as a result, Tanzania's Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, BirdLife International, the local community and other stakeholders are currently developing a funding proposal.

Mining of soda ash at Lake Natron would contravene international conventions, especially that of Ramsar. During a Ramsar Advisory Mission in February 2008, the government of Tanzania was asked to prepare an Integrated Management Plan (IMP) for the Lake Natron Ramsar Site. "The IMP has not been developed to date" said Ken Mwathe, Policy and Advocacy Manager at the BirdLife International Africa office. "A holistic plan for the entire area must be developed and all major developments, including road and rail networks subjected to Strategic Environmental Assessment." BirdLife International is also concerned that the Tanzanian government has not taken into consideration an economic study completed in 2012, in which experts from Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania concluded that soda ash mining would deliver negative returns to the Tanzanian economy and local people (with a projected loss of between US$44 and US$492 million over 50 years). In contrast, the Tanzanian public and local communities would gain between US$1.28 and US$1.57 billion over the same period, if the government invested in tourism, protection of the environment and promotion of local livelihood alternatives.

Sources: World Birdwatch *36(2), p. 5; http://www.birdlife.org/africa/news/fresh-lake-natron-soda-ash-push-threatens-future-east-africa%E2%80%99s-flamingos*

Kenyan highland grasslands under threat

A recent paper in these pages highlighted the apparently worsening conservation status of Sharpe's Longclaw *Macronyx sharpei*, which is endemic to Kenya and currently categorised as Endangered (*Bull. ABC* 20: 149–155). Recent research has highlighted a decline of 90% in Kenya's high-altitude grasslands over the last two decades due to changes in land use, development and conversion of grasslands to agriculture, as well as population growth, leading to serious decreases in habitat specialists such as the longclaw. Only *c.*16% of the current range of highland grassland from Mount Kenya in the east to Mount Elgon in the west remains suitable for Sharpe's Longclaw, and the decline of highland grassland during the last ten years has been especially dramatic. The same Kenyan / Italian / German team of conservationists responsible for the species' rediscovery in Mount Kenya National Park, reported here, also collected blood samples for DNA research. These will be used to examine the genetic relatedness and degree of isolation of the longclaws occurring in different parts of Kenya's highlands. A Sharpe's Longclaw Working Group has been formed and this will meet once per year to update research and conservation outcomes on this threatened species. The work has been funded by NABU (BirdLife in Germany).

Source: World Birdwatch *36(2), p. 2*

Ngulia Lodge ringing study

The phenomenon of Palearctic migrants (mainly passerines) being attracted to the floodlights of Ngulia Lodge, in Tsavo West National Park, southern Kenya, during misty or wet conditions in late

Common Whitethroat / Fauvette grisette *Sylvia communis* (John Caddick)

autumn (November–December) was discovered by the late Alec Forbes-Watson in 1969 (see *Bull. ABC* 21: 115–116). Published in May 2014, *Scopus* Special Supplement No. 4 is entitled the 'The study and ringing of Palaearctic birds at Ngulia Lodge, Tsavo West National Park, Kenya, 1969–2012: an overview and update', by David Pearson *et al.* The three main species to be trapped and ringed are Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* (which passes between mid November and January), Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia* (passage ends in mid December) and Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*, while the overall total of Palearctic migrants caught is 499,677, which has yielded 222 long-distance recoveries (122 from breeding areas in Eurasia, 81 in Middle Eastern passage sites, 18 in southern African wintering areas, and one from a probable Ethiopian stopover site), but only 63 re-traps in subsequent seasons. Plumage characters and biometrics indicate that most species' breeding populations are from Eastern Europe or western and Central Asia. The paper discusses patterns of moult and mass data, as well trends in populations and major outstanding questions such as the location of autumn stopover areas elsewhere in north-east Africa and the events that cause the migrants to be grounded in such large numbers at Ngulia.

Source: Scopus Spec. Suppl. *4, pp. 1–80*

Immune system adjustments enable House Sparrows to colonise new areas

As part of their research into understanding the successful spread of invasive species, Lynn Martin and Aaron Schrey of Armstrong Atlantic State University examined the House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* population in Kenya and tested the hypothesis that variation in the regulation of inflammation has contributed to its spread. They found that at the molecular level, the immune systems of sparrows at the edge of the species' range were more attuned to dangerous parasites than those of birds nearer to Mombasa, the site of introduction around 1950. Although other factors were important for predicting immune system variation, such as whether individuals were infected by malaria, population age was the best predictor: in edge populations, sparrows' immune cells expressed significantly more of the surveillance molecule for microbe components than in populations at older sites. This suggests that adjustments to the immune system may have been important to the success of the House Sparrow's invasion of Kenya.

Source: Proc. Roy. Soc. B. *2014 281 20132690; doi:10.1098/rspb.2013.2690*

Ugandan farmland needs trees

There has been a lot of work done on farmland in Europe to determine what are the most important factors for promoting bird diversity. Now, David Douglas *et al.* have performed a similar job in Ugandan farmland. Neither bird species richness nor richness of forest visitors was related to any measure of tree cover, but richness of forest-dependent species was positively related to the number of native trees present. The density of ten out of 17 forest-dependent species had at least one positive relationship with tree cover, and native trees were far more important than exotics. The total density of the 17 species was positively related to the total number of native trees and the number of large native trees present. Modelling suggested that one or two large trees or 30 native trees of any size would increase bird density of these species by about one individual per ha. Exotic trees help little and have little influence despite numbering 40% of the trees present. Retention and planting of native trees should be encouraged.

Source: Anim. Conserv. *17, pp. 256–264*

News on the proposed Serengeti highway: the battle goes on

The East African Court of Justice has delivered a long-awaited ruling on the case brought against the Tanzanian government by organisations seeking to permanently halt the construction of a 53-km commercial highway across the Serengeti, Tanzania's oldest national park (*cf. Bull ABC* 18: 143). The good news is that construction of a bitumen road across the UNESCO World Heritage Site has been judged 'unlawful'. However, the judges only ruled on the illegality of a bitumen or tarmac road, but left the question open as to the construction of a gravel road along the same route, which the Tanzanian government had said they were considering. Organisations opposed to the highway continue to lobby the government to accept the alternative route around the southern edge of the park, which is only slightly longer. It seems that the battle for the survival of the Serengeti is not won yet.

Source: http://africageographic.com/blog/serengeti-highway-a-no-go/#sthash.KeTH0hsy.dpuf

Nyungwe Bird Watching Club, Rwanda

ABC members will be pleased to learn that this relatively new club is flourishing. A recent field trip to Akagera National Park was attended by 20 children, which included a boat trip on Lake Ihema. They also visited Mohana. A wide variety of birds was seen and mammals included a Spotted Hyena *Crocuta crocuta*. It was a superb day and the children's first safari experience. It was a great opportunity for them and for many it was also the first time away from their family. The club has benefited from donations from several sources, including field guides and binoculars. Regular trips are planned, including to the Nyungwe forest. For further information, e-mail: jasonanderson1@gmail.com

Source: James Hogg in litt. *July 2014*

Indian Ocean islands

Madagascar Fish Eagle still in low numbers

A survey of the Critically Endangered Madagascar Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vociferoides* in the breeding seasons of 2005 and 2006, by Gilbert Razafimanjato *et al.*, located 287 birds, of which 98 were in breeding pairs, 23 were in trios, 15 were singles and seven were immatures. Of the total, 128 were on lakes and 116 in coastal areas, primarily mangroves, with 32 on marine islands and 11 on rivers. This is an overall increase of *c.*25% since a similar survey in 1995, but the numbers are still low due to persecution (hunting and collecting), overfishing and habitat destruction.

Source: Bird Conserv. Intern. *24, pp. 88–99*

Madagascar Fish Eagle / Pygargue de Madagascar *Haliaeetus vociferoides* (Phil Palmer / Bird Holidays)

New breeding site for Henst's Goshawk

The Near Threatened Henst's Goshawk *Accipiter henstii* is endemic to Madagascar, where it is widespread in the east, west and north of the country, but has been recorded only rarely from the sub-arid south and south-west, where its occurrence is unconfirmed over large areas. Charlie Gardner and Louise Jasper have recently reported the discovery of a breeding pair at Ranofoty, in the Fiherenana River valley, in south-west Madagascar, filling a gap in our knowledge of its distribution and adding to the avifauna of Ranobe-PK32 protected area.

Source: Check List *10, pp. 164–165*

Restoration of a lost seabird community in Mauritius gains momentum

With the aim of restoring a lost seabird community on Île aux Aigrettes, a small (27-ha) island in Mahebourg Bay, *c.*850 m off the south-east coast of Mauritius, the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation (BirdLife in Mauritius) commenced a translocation project in 2009. To date, 280 seabirds of five different species have been released. Building on successful releases in 2009 and 2011, a trial translocation from Serpent Island took place in 2013. Seventeen Brown Noddies *Anous stolidus* and 21 Sooty Terns *Onychoprion fuscatus* were released, with all but one bird fledging successfully. Nestlings were translocated to a cordoned-off area on Île aux Aigrettes and fed twice a day from communal trays, after the initial weeks of individual hand-feeding. They remained around the release site for some weeks post-fledging and continued to return to the island to be fed before gradually spending extended periods out at sea. This appears to be the first time that these species have been translocated or hand-reared in any numbers, and lays the groundwork for more challenging seabird restorations in the future.

Source: www.birdlife.org/africa/news/restoration-lost-seabird-community-mauritius-gaining-momentum

Brown Noddy / Noddi brun *Anous stolidus* (Jacques de Spéville)

Emergency three-year action plan for lemurs

Primatologists from Bristol Zoological Society, Conservation International, and the IUCN Species Survival Commission Primate Specialist Group have developed an emergency three-year action plan for lemurs, Madagascar's endemic group of primates. Outlined in a paper published in the journal *Science*, the action plan contains strategies for 30 different priority sites for lemur conservation, and aims to help fund-raise for individual projects.

Source: Science *21 February 2014, pp. 842–843*

Southern Africa

Survival of rehabilitated Cape Vultures

Ara Monadjem *et al.* have discovered that the survival of rehabilitated Cape Vultures *Gyps coprotheres* is considerably reduced (75%) compared to that of wild-caught birds (91%) after allowing for age of birds, etc. Modelling all of these figures revealed that natural populations would increase, populations comprising solely of rehabilitated birds would decrease, and with 50% of each the population would be stable. For the species'

Cape Vulture / Vautour chassefiente *Gyps coprotheres* (James Hogg)

conservation, it is therefore essential to carefully examine the causes of injuries and poisoning so that rehabilitation is not needed.

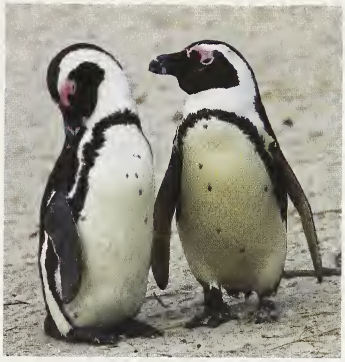
Source: Anim. Conserv. *17, pp. 52–60*

Urban Peregrines doing well in South Africa

The urban population of Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus* at Cape Town, South Africa, has increased from three pairs in 1997 to 18 pairs in 2010. The provision of nestboxes appears to have stimulated this growth, but the most important factor has been immigration from other areas.

Source: Ibis *156, pp. 107–115*

Nestboxes are problematic for African Penguins



African Penguins / Manchots du Cap *Spheniscus demersus* (Adam Riley)

Artificial nests have been provided for African Penguins *Spheniscus demersus* for some years on Bird Island in Algoa Bay. However, Bonnie Lei *et al.* have found them to be much less suitable than natural nests, with the artificial ones often showing a higher temperature and lower humidity, both of which cause problems for the nesting adults and their chicks, and the reduced humidity causes considerable water loss from eggs. For example, fibreglass nestboxes retained temperatures higher than 30°C for longer than natural sites. Cement boxes held more moderate temperatures and hence higher nest survival, but were still less than ideal. More work is needed to create good boxes.

Source: Bird Conserv. Intern. *24, pp. 201–213*

Peregrine Falcon / Faucon pèlerin *Falco peregrinus* (Adam Riley)

Wind farms in Lesotho highlands threaten vultures

There is increasing evidence that wind farms cause bird mortality and there are now plans to build some in the highlands of Lesotho. Tracking studies of the regionally Endangered Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus meridionalis* and Vulnerable Cape Vulture *Gyps coprotheres*, by Ian Rushworth and Sonja Kruger, reveal that both these species are especially prevalent along ridges and on the upper slopes of mountains—prime areas for the development of wind farms—and that the birds typically fly at heights at which they would be most susceptible to collisions. Modelling the impacts demonstrated that even under conservative assumptions, two specific proposed developments would have significant impacts and cause declines in both species to accelerate. The only solution appears to be to persuade developers to site wind farms away from the birds' primary use areas.

Source: Ostrich *85, pp. 13–23*

Separating male and female Cape Gannets

In an attempt to distinguish sexes in the Cape Gannet *Morus capensis*, researchers from the Percy FitzPatrick Institute, South Africa, recorded morphometric measurements from genetically sexed birds. Although sexes have long been considered similar, they found that males had significantly longer culmens and gular stripes than females. However, as there is overlap in measurements between the sexes, these morphometric criteria hold limited value.

Source: African Zool. *49, pp. 107–112*

Okavango Delta becomes 1,000th World Heritage Site

The Okavango Delta in north-west Botswana has become the 1,000th site to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. The delta, which is the most important wetland in southern Africa, comprises permanent marshlands and seasonally flooded plains. It is one of the very few major interior delta systems that does not flow into a sea or ocean. One of the site's unique characteristics is that annual flooding from the Okavango River occurs during the dry season. The Okavango Delta is an Important Bird Area and 450 bird species have been recorded. Wattled Crane *Grus carunculatus* and Slaty Egret *Egretta vinaceigula* breed,

Cape Gannets / Fous du Cap *Morus capensis* (Jacques de Spéville)

Wattled Crane / Grue caronculée
Grus carunculatus (Jacques de Spéville)

with the delta being the world's most important breeding site for the latter.

Source: http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1159

Taxonomic proposals

A new prion on Gough Island?

The genus *Pachyptila* (prions) is characterized by relatively low levels of morphological diversity, with all six regularly recognized species conforming to the same basic plumage pattern. Some of these were only comparatively treated specifically when increased knowledge of their ranges and ecology revealed that different forms were breeding in sympatry without mixing. Bill size and structure are important discriminators between the different species, making the discovery that there are apparently two populations of Broad-billed Prion *Pachyptila vittata* with different bill sizes of considerable taxonomic interest. *P. vittata*, which breeds on temperate-latitude islands in the central South Atlantic and around New Zealand, is (as befits is vernacular name) the largest species in terms of bill width, which averages 21–22 mm. Peter Ryan and colleagues have discovered that on Gough Island, there are both typical adults breeding in some areas and narrower-billed birds in others (average bill width 18–19 mm). The latter population also has a slightly shorter bill with blue on the maxilla, and marginally shorter head and wings (mean 1–2% smaller than typical adults), but it is the difference in bill width that is most marked (15%). These birds are similar in size to so-called MacGillivray's (Salvin's) Prion *P. salvini macgillivrayi* from Amsterdam and St Paul Islands in the Indian Ocean, which taxon has been suggested to either merit specific status or to be more closely aligned to *P. vittata*. The discovery was made by a research team working to eradicate House Mice *Mus musculus* from Gough and seems to have been overlooked in the past due to the abundance of *P. vittata* on the island, meaning that previous visitors did not have to move far from the landing sites to sample the species. Given that the small-billed birds breed *c.*3 months later than large-billed birds, it is possible that they represent a separate species, rather than an example of bill polymorphism.

Source: Polar Biol. *37, pp. 727–735;* African Birdlife *2(4), pp. 10–11*

Little Brown Bustard is closely related to Little Bustard

A recent molecular study of Little Brown Bustard *Eupodotis humilis* has found that, contrary to traditional morphological studies, it is more closely related to the Eurasian / North African Little Bustard *Tetrax tetrax* than to other species in the *Eupodotis* group. Previous molecular studies have demonstrated that *Eupodotis* is polyphyletic, and therefore that many phenotypic characters and traits are not taxonomically informative for bustards.

Source: Ostrich *85, pp. 97–101*

Black-tailed Godwit is three species?

New genetic research by K. B. Trimbos and co-workers reveals historical and recent isolation in the Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*. The species has traditionally been regarded as comprising three subspecies, but analyses based on nuclear introns and mtDNA suggest that the three morphologically distinct and geographically separated taxa might be regarded as species, Icelandic *L. islandica*, European *L. limosa* and Asian Black-tailed Godwits *L. melanuroides*.

Source: PLoS ONE *9(1): e83949. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0083949*

Madeira Laurel Pigeon / Pigeon trocaz
Columba trocaz (Mark Eising)

Wood Pigeon / Pigeon ramier
Columba palumbus (John Caddick)

Large pigeons in Macaronesia

The Canaries, Madeira and the Azores all possess large pigeons considered variously to be endemic species or races. Catarina Dourado *et al.* have examined various genetic markers (both mitochondrial and nuclear) to test their relationships. Madeira Laurel Pigeon *Columba trocaz* (Madeira) clustered with Dark-tailed Laurel Pigeon *C. bollii* of the Canaries and more so than either with the other Canarian bird, White-tailed Laurel Pigeon *C. junioniae*, which seems to have diverged independently from the presumed source bird, the Wood Pigeon *C. palumbus*. *C. trocaz* and *C. bollii* are also closer to one another than either is to *C. palumbus*, both the population in Europe and that in the Azores. There is no difference between these latter suggesting that Azores *C. palumbus azorica* is only a recent coloniser.

Source: J. Ornithol. *155, pp. 71–82*

Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo is suggested to be two species

Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx montanus* has a population (*C. m. patulus*) that is migratory and breeds in the lowlands in parts of south-east Africa, whereas the nominate race is a sedentary resident montane species in the Albertine Rift mountains. Two specimens collected many years ago in the lowlands near the Albertine Rift, and identified as *patulus* from their plumage characteristics, have recently been confirmed to have been correctly identified using DNA markers. Joshua Engel *et al.* argue that the nominate race is a population that simply did not return to the 'normal' breeding grounds and hence became sedentary. They also suggest that, given constant morphological differences between them, it is probably best to consider the two populations as separate species.

Source: Ibis *156, pp. 330–340*

Montane Nightjar reconsidered

In 1995, Nigel Cleere re-examined the taxonomy of the entire Montane Nightjar *Caprimulgus poliocephalus* complex and decided to recognise two species therein, separated mainly by vocal differences, namely monotypic *C. poliocephalus* in the north, and polytypic Rwenzori Nightjar *C. ruwenzorii*, with two subspecies (*ruwenzorii* and *guttifer*), in the south, while treating the poorly known taxon *koesteri* as a synonym of *ruwenzorii*. This arrangement, which was adopted in both major monographs of the Caprimulgiformes published recently, was similar to that used in *The Birds of Africa* in that two species were recognised, but differed insomuch that the latter work treated the taxa *guttifer* and *koesteri* as subspecies of *C. poliocephalus*. Doubts concerning the species status of *Caprimulgus ruwenzorii*, and inclusion of Benguela Nightjar *C. koesteri* in its synonymy, have recently been re-examined by Des Jackson using mensural data from the entire montane nightjar complex, and a re-examination of the plumage of *koesteri*. Jackson concludes that both these taxa are better treated as subspecies of *C. poliocephalus*, at least on current evidence.

Source: Bull. Br. Ornithol. Club *134, pp. 62–69*

Montane Nightjar / Engoulevent d'Abyssinie *Caprimulgus poliocephalus* (Nik Borrow)

Rwenzori Nightjar / Engoulevent du Ruwenzori *Caprimulgus ruwenzorii* (Nik Borrow)

Nomenclature and taxonomy of Grey-headed Bristlebill

All authorities over the past century have cited Grey-headed Bristlebill *Bleda canicapillus* as having been named by Hartlaub in 1854, but in fact the name dates from 1850. The type locality has been given as Sierra Leone, while the population in Senegambia has been separated as race *morelorum*. However, Hartlaub's name is based on a type from Gambia, while analysis of a series of specimens from Nigeria to Gambia suggests individual variation in the species is extensive and does not support Érard's (1991) claim of a subspecific difference. Based on these data, John Penhallurick and Lincoln Fishpool contest that Grey-headed Bristlebill should be considered monotypic.

Source: Bull. Br. Ornithol. Club *134, pp. 155–158*

The ongoing problem posed by the Mourning Wheatear complex

We recently reported the results of another genetic attempt to unravel the taxonomy and relationships within the Middle Eastern and north-east African species complex, Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens* (see *Bull. ABC* 21: 25). The North African population of Black Wheatear has been treated as *Oenanthe leucura syenitica* for more than 100 years. The type of *syenitica* was collected by Heuglin in June 1852 near the southern Egypt / northern Sudan border, well outside the range of the sedentary Black Wheatear (Iberia and north-west North Africa). Morphometric inference and genetic analyses of partial sequences of the mitochondrial gene demonstrate that the type specimen of *syenitica* is not conspecific with *O. leucura*, but is closely related to *O. lugens*, being most similar in plumage to the recently described *O. lugens warriae* of the basalt deserts of north-east Jordan and southern Syria. While *syenitica* was not separable in the analysed part of its mtDNA from *O. l. lugens* and *O. l. warriae* (like several well-recognised species of *Oenanthe*), it differs in morphometrics and plumage features from the latter. The type specimen is a first-summer bird with the abraded plumage expected for June, and might thus have been collected in its breeding range. Its morphological distinctiveness implies that *syenitica* might be taxonomically

Mourning Wheatear / Traquet deuil *Oenanthe lugens* (Sergey Dereliev)

Socotra Bunting / Bruant de Socotra
Emberiza socotrana (Adam Riley)

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting / Bruant cannelle
Emberiza tahapisi (Werner Suter)

distinct from *warriae*. However, as it is known only from the type and its few associated data, the authors of the study (Hadoram Shirihai *et al.*) proposed to treat it as a *subspecies inquirenda* of *O. lugens*. In consequence, and because there are no genetic or morphological differences between North African populations of *O. leucura* and *riggenbachi* Hartert, 1909, the name originally applied to the population in Western Sahara, the North African population takes the oldest available name to become *O. leucura riggenbachi*.

Source: Zootaxa *3785, pp. 1–24*

The position of Socotra Bunting

Monophyly of the African 'brown bunting' complex was corroborated by a recent molecular study (*cf. Bull. ABC* 20: 146–147). However, the little-known Socotran endemic *Emberiza socotrana*, which is morphologically similar to the other taxa in this complex, was not included. Now, Manuel Schweizer and Guy Kirwan have presented a hypothesis of the phylogenetic relationships of this bunting based on one mitochondrial gene and one nuclear intron. They found Socotra Bunting to be deeply nested within the African 'brown bunting' complex and, although morphologically most similar to Cape Bunting *E. capensis*, it proved to be more closely related to the House *E. striolata* / Striolated Bunting *E. sahari* and Cinnamon-breasted *E. tahapisi* / Gosling's Buntings *E. goslingi* species groups.

Source: Ostrich *85, pp. 103–106*

Relationships of elephant birds suggest that ancestral ratites could fly

The elephant birds, Family Aepyornithidae, were giant ratites native to Madagascar that became extinct probably during the 17th century. The species *Aepyornis maximus* was 3 m tall and weighed perhaps >400 kg, being the heaviest of all known birds. A recent study has sequenced near-complete mitochondrial genomes from two species, *Aepyornis hildebrandti* and *Mullerornis agilis*, and compared them with those of the extant ratites. Unexpectedly, the closest relatives of the elephant birds appear to be the New Zealand kiwis (Apterygidae), not the Ostrich *Struthio camelus*. This strongly contradicts the previous hypothesis based on continental vicariance, since Madagascar and New Zealand have never been directly connected, and molecular dates calculated from the genetic data suggest that kiwis and elephant birds diverged following the breakup of Gondwana, which implies that their common ancestor could fly and was capable of long-distance dispersal.

Source: Science *344, pp. 898–900*

Internet resources

Indigobirds—another website on Africa's avian cheats

Indigobirds are African parasitic finches that lay their eggs in the nests of other species, mainly Estrildidae finches. Most indigobirds parasitise a single host species and adult males include songs of their host species in their own repertoire. Experiments with captive birds have demonstrated that this mimicry of host song is the result of a behavioural imprinting process in which both male and female indigobirds learn the songs of the host species. As a result, individuals mainly mate with others reared by the same host, and females parasitise nests belonging to the same species that raised them. This results in the cohesion of indigobird species, but also provides a mechanism for rapid sympatric speciation. A new multimedia website www.indigobirds.com is devoted to collecting and disseminating information on these brood parasites, especially by collecting recordings of their songs from both amateur and professional ornithologists. Anyone possessing or interested in collecting indigobird recordings is invited to contact the webmasters at indigos@bu.edu. They will attempt to identify the species recorded and use the information to improve the database of indigobird distributions on the website.

Source: Jeffrey DaCosta in litt. *to AfricanBirding, April 2014*

Separation of Short-toed *Circaetus gallicus* and Beaudouin's Snake Eagles *C. beaudouini* in western Africa

Ralph Buij[a] and Dick Forsman[b]

Séparer le Circaète Jean-le-Blanc *Circaetus gallicus* du Circaète de Beaudouin *C. beaudouini* en Afrique de l'Ouest. Des caractéristiques sont présentées qui facilitent la distinction entre le Circaète Jean-le-Blanc *Circaetus gallicus* et le Circaète de Beaudouin *C. beaudouini* en Afrique de l'Ouest. Les descriptions sont basées sur des observations faites pendant tous les mois de l'année sur les aires de reproduction et de post-reproduction du Circaète de Beaudouin et les aires de migration et d'hivernage du Circaète Jean-le-Blanc. Des détails de plumage d'oiseaux de tout âge sont fournis, illustrés par des photos d'individus perchés et en vol. Il s'agit notamment de plumages de transition et des jeunes de *C. beaudouini* qui n'ont pas encore été décrits de manière adéquate. Contrairement aux idées reçues, la séparation des deux espèces devrait être relativement simple.

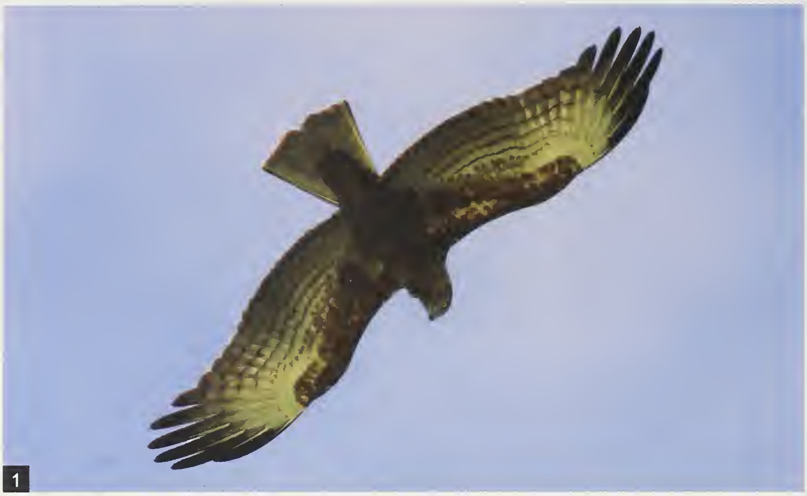
Summary. Features facilitating the separation of Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* from Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *C. beaudouini* are presented. Descriptions are based on field observations made in all months of the year at the breeding and post-breeding sites of Beaudouin's Snake Eagle and the migration and wintering areas of Short-toed Snake Eagle. Plumage details of birds of all ages are given and illustrated by photographs, especially the transition plumages of *C. beaudouini* and those of young birds, which had not been adequately described to date. Contrary to widespread belief, separation of these species should be relatively straightforward.

Despite significant advances in the field identification of Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini* (Clark 1999, 2000), especially its separation from Short-toed Snake Eagle *C. gallicus*, few field guides and handbooks correctly depict juvenile and adult plumages. To further complicate matters, Beaudouin's Snake Eagle is treated as a race of Short-toed Snake Eagle in some widely used regional field guides (e.g. Zimmerman *et al.* 1996, Stevenson & Fanshawe 2002). This is hampering monitoring efforts, particularly in West Africa where Beaudouin's Snake Eagle appears to have significantly decreased since the 1970s (Thiollay 2006), as a result of which it is currently considered Vulnerable on IUCN's Red List (IUCN 2013). In Sahelian West and Central Africa, Beaudouin's and Short-toed Snake Eagle co-occur during much of the year, although the bulk of their populations are fairly well separated at different latitudes during the year (Thiollay 1978). During the dry season, or boreal winter, when most Short-toed Snake Eagles visit sub-Saharan Africa and the identification problem is most acute, the bulk of the Beaudouin's Snake Eagle population occurs in Sudano-Guinean savannas south of the largely Sahelian range of the Short-toed Snake Eagle. However, many Beaudouin's Snake Eagles can linger in the Sahel, and Short-toed Snake Eagles migrate south into Sudano-Guinean savannas i.e. the dry-season breeding range of Beaudouin's Snake Eagle (Thiollay 1977, Buij *et al.* 2013).

Here, we present various additional field marks to those previously described in publications on the identification of these species (Clark 1999, 2000, Clark & Barlow 2004), which should further aid researchers aiming to elucidate the relative abundance, trends and distribution of both species in western Africa. We focus on plumage characters of all ages, notably juvenile and transition plumages of Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, which have not been adequately described and are inaccurately depicted in nearly every guide and handbook.

Methods

The descriptions of both species are based largely on photographs and observations of Beaudouin's Snake Eagle in Cameroon, Benin (RB), Senegal, Ghana, Uganda (DF) and The Gambia (RB & DF), and of Short-toed Snake Eagle widely in western Africa, Europe and the Middle East, mostly in Spain and Israel. Observations in Cameroon covered all months of the year, and were centred on the breeding and post-breeding dispersal ranges of Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, and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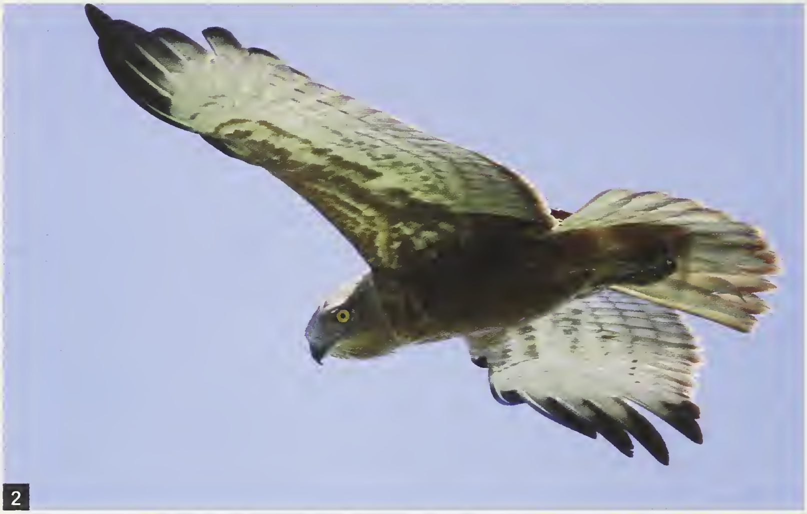
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Figures 1–2. Juvenile Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*, Cameroon, 20 July 2008 (Ralph Buij). Unlike any plumage of Short-toed Snake Eagle *C. gallicus*; note narrow bars on white-tipped, dusky secondaries, pale primary windows and indistinct bars on tail. The extent of rufous coloration varies between individuals (these are two different birds) and light conditions.

Circaète de Beaudouin *Circaetus beaudouini* juvénile, Cameroun, 20 juillet 2008 (Ralph Buij). Diffèere de n'importe quel plumage du Circaète Jean-le-Blanc *C. gallicus*; noter les fines barres horizontales sur les rémiges secondaires sombres à bout blanc, la 'fenêtre' pâle sur les primaires et les barres peu distinctes sur la queue. L'étendue de la coloration rousse varie entre les individus (les photos représentent deux oiseaux différents) et les conditions d'éclairage.

the southern part of the winter range of Short-toed Snake Eagle.

Results

Plumages are described for three age categories, which can be reliably distinguished in the field: juveniles, transition-plumage types and adults.

Juveniles

Juveniles of both species are easily separated in the field.

Underparts. Juvenile *beaudouini* have dark rufous-brown underparts, although the intensity of the rufous tone varies between individuals and with light conditions. Feathers on head and upper breast are often slightly paler (Figs. 1–2). Thighs, vent, axillaries and undertail-coverts are broadly barred (Figs. 3–4), the throat is coarsely mottled in some juveniles, possibly as a result of moult in older individuals, and 3–4 (depending on wear) indistinct bars are visible on the tail (Figs. 1–4). Remiges have a diffuse subterminal band and 3–4 narrow bands, with the exception of pp6–10, which have dark tips. Secondaries are darker than the (whitish) primaries, especially the outer webs, with a pale window at the base of the primaries. The lesser and darker brown median coverts are variably mottled rufous-brown, while greater coverts are whitish with dark rufous-brown tips. Secondaries display a bulging trailing edge, with an indentation near the body. Fresh juveniles (July) have narrow whitish tips to the remiges, which are gradually lost with wear.

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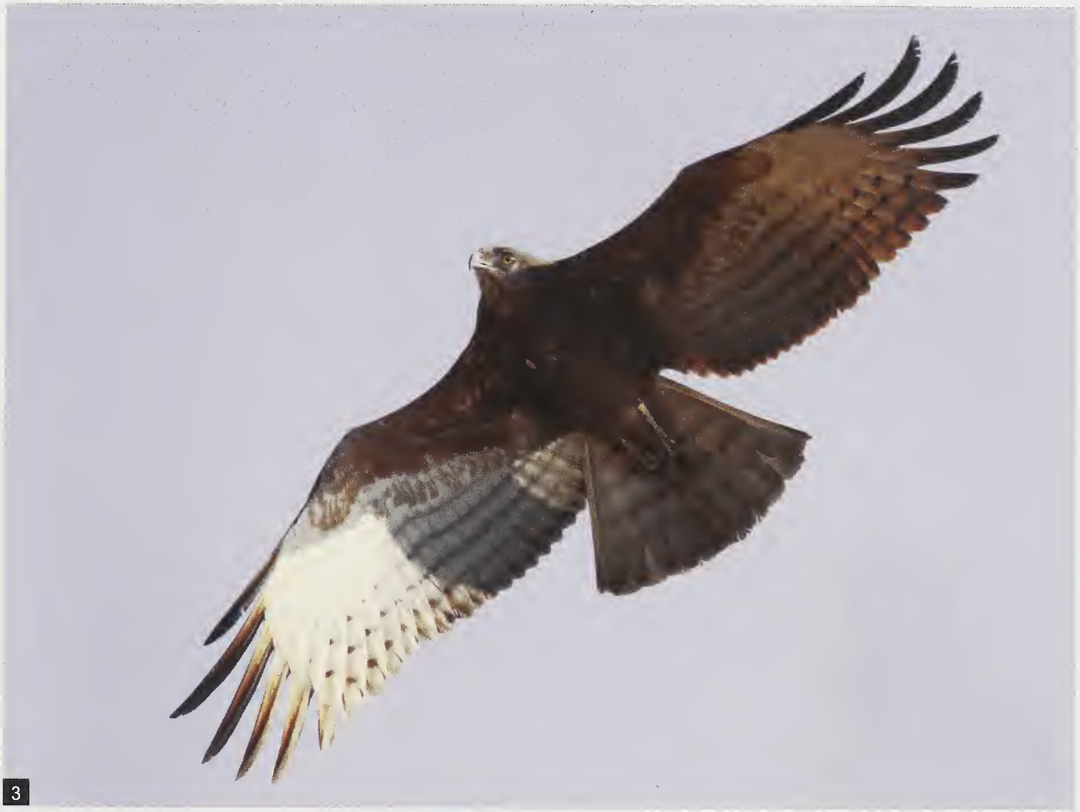

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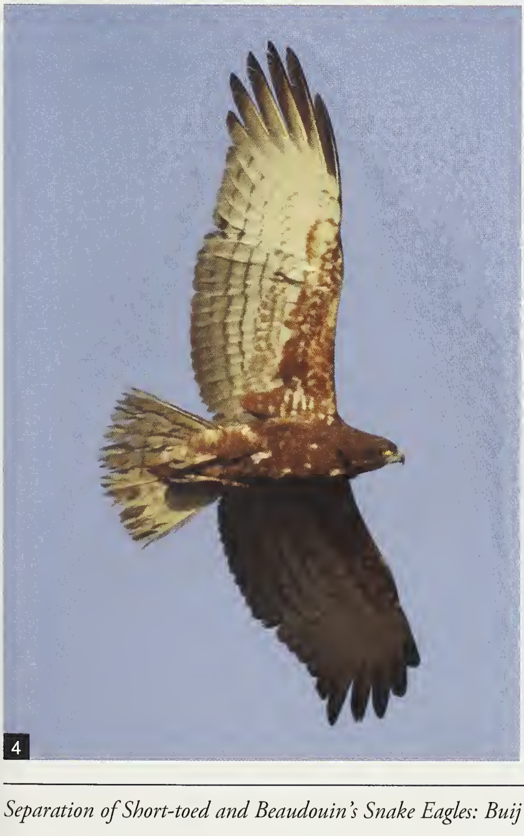
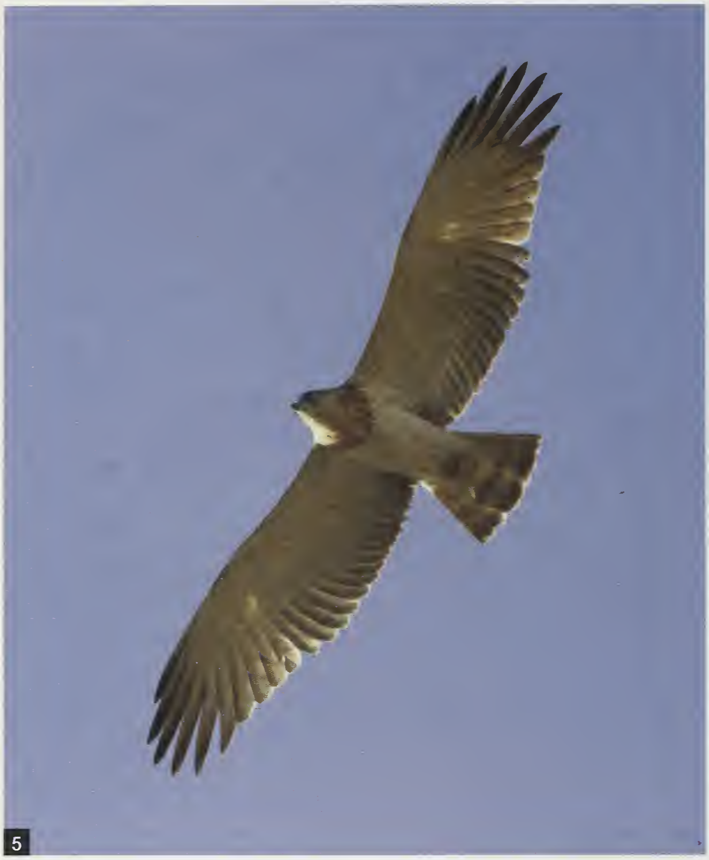


Figures 3–4. Juvenile Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*, Cameroon, 27 November 2008 (Fig. 3) and 5 January 2009 (Fig. 4; Ralph Buij). 'Trousers', vent, axillaries and undertail-coverts gradually become broadly barred through moult in older juveniles, and the throat coarsely mottled, while whitish tips to remiges are lost with wear.

Circaète de Beaudouin *Circaetus beaudouini* juvénile, Cameroun, 27 novembre 2008 (Fig. 3) et 5 janvier 2009 (Fig. 4 ; Ralph Buij). Chez les juvéniles plus agés, la 'culotte', le bas-ventre, les axillaires et les sous-caudales acquièrent progressivement des barres plus larges après la mue et la gorge devient mouchetée, tandis que les bouts blancs des rémiges disparaissent par l'usure.

Juvenile *gallicus* appears almost uniformly pale below (Figs. 5–6), or have a rufous-brown hood and some spotting and streaking; they are separated from adults by fine, frequently even absent (and rather irregular) barring on the secondaries, and by the absence of a broad subterminal band to the wing. Also the rufous-brown colour of the hood and body markings differs from the greyer colour of adults.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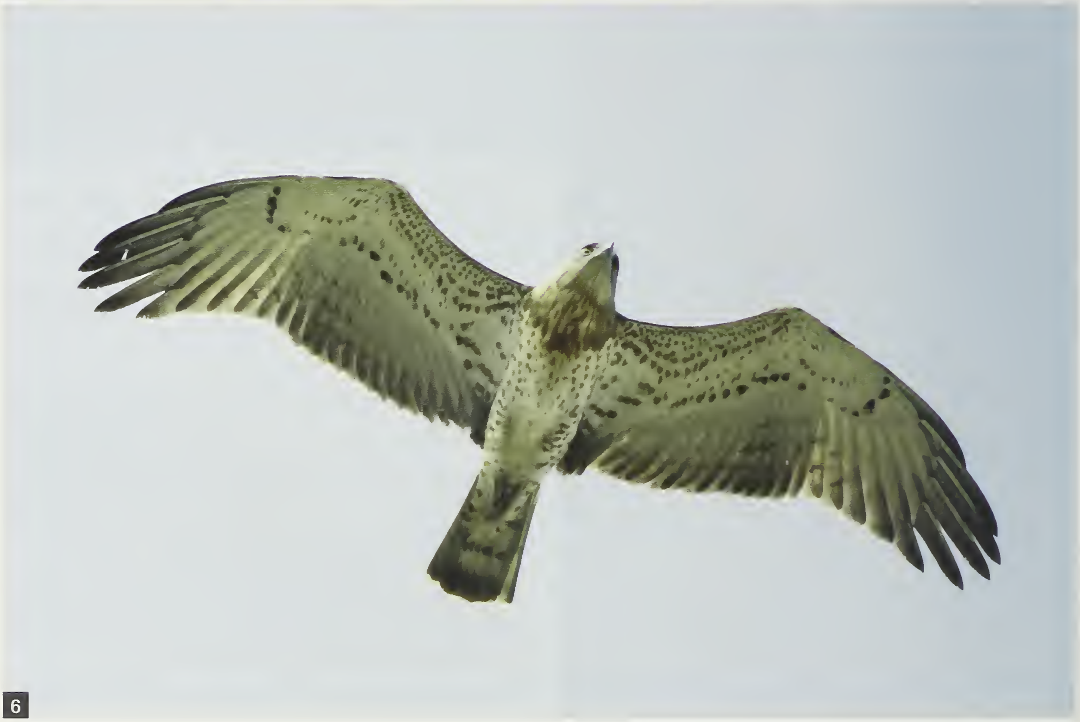
Figures 5–6. Juvenile Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*, Cameroon, 14 January 2007 (Fig. 5; Ralph Buij) and Spain, 16 September 2011 (Fig. 6; Dick Forsman). Juveniles are usually pale below, with rufous-brown spotting and streaking on the head, breast and coverts. Note much-reduced barring on the secondaries and lack of a broad subterminal band to the wing, typical for juveniles. Narrower-winged than adult, thus shape more like Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *C. beaudouini*.

Circaète Jean-le-Blanc *Circaetus gallicus* juvénile, Cameroun, 14 janvier 2007 (Fig. 5 ; Ralph Buij) et Espagne, 16 septembre 2011 (Fig. 6 ; Dick Forsman). Les juvéniles sont d'habitude pâles dessous, avec la tête, la poitrine et les couvertures tachetées et rayées de brun-roux. Noter les barres des secondaires très réduites et l'absence d'une large bande subterminale sur l'aile, caractéristiques des juvéniles. Les ailes sont plus étroites que chez l'adulte, produisant ainsi une silhouette plus semblable à celle du Circaète de Beaudouin *C. beaudouini*.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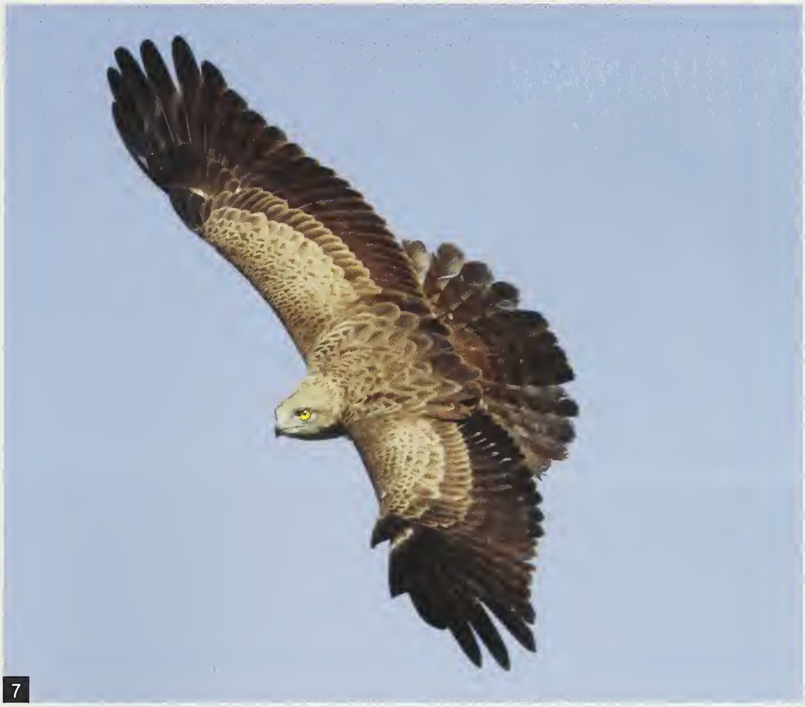

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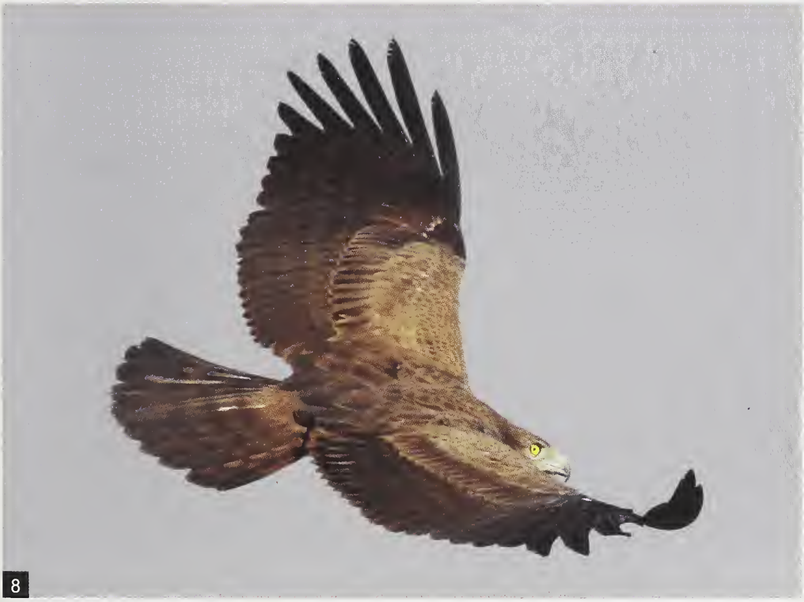

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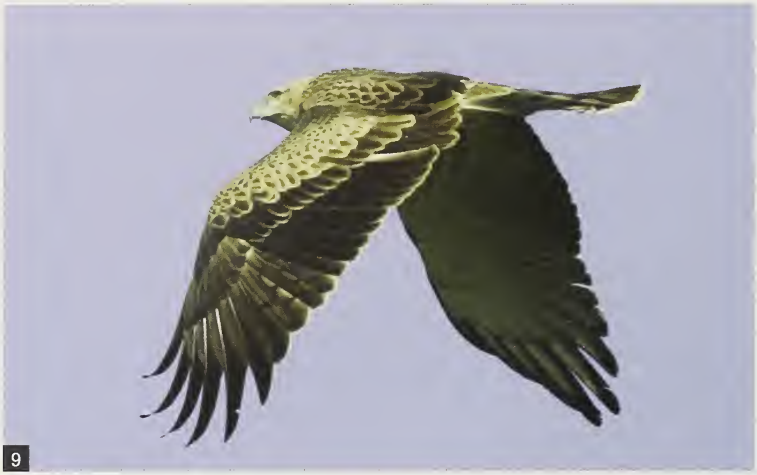
Figures 7–8. Juvenile Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*, Cameroon, 20 July 2008 (Fig. 7) and 27 November 2008 (Fig. 8; Ralph Buij). Pale brown wing-coverts (but not as pale as juvenile Short-toed Snake Eagle *C. gallicus*), pale tips to greater coverts and mantle contrast with darker remiges and rectrices that have barely visible barring.

Circaète de Beaudouin *Circaetus beaudouini* juvénile, Cameroun, 20 juillet 2008 (Fig. 7) et 27 novembre 2008 (Fig. 8 ; Ralph Buij). Les couvertures alaires brun pâle (mais pas aussi pâles que chez le juvénile du Circaète Jean-le-Blanc *C. gallicus*), les bouts pâles des grandes couvertures et du manteau contrastent avec les rémiges et les rectrices foncées, qui ont des barres à peine visibles.

Upperparts. Upperwing-coverts, mantle and uppertail-coverts of juvenile *beaudouini* are pale brown, contrasting with dark brown remiges (Figs. 7–8). The greater coverts have pale tips and are darker than the lesser and median coverts. Three dark bars are barely visible on the wings and tail.

Fresh juvenile *gallicus* have more contrasting upperparts than *beaudouini*, with much paler, sandy-brown lesser and median coverts, sharply contrasting with the dark remiges (Figs. 9–10). The pale tips to the dark greater coverts form a more distinct pale band on the upperwing compared to juvenile *beaudouini*. Juvenile *gallicus*



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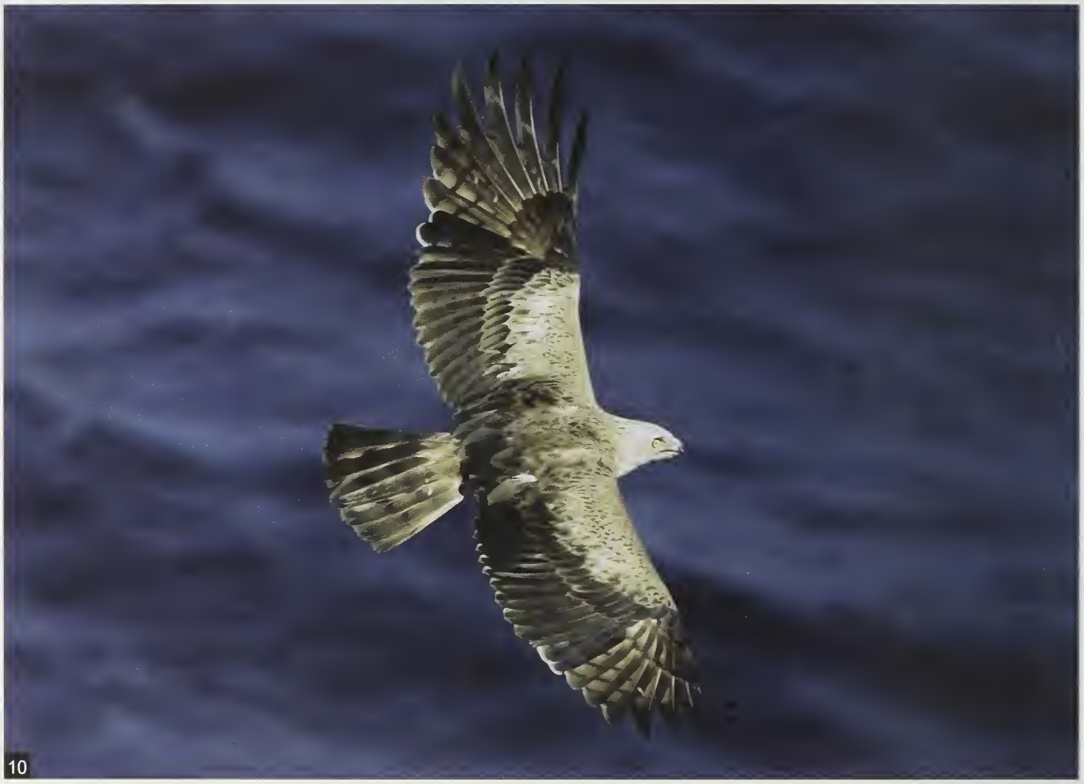

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Figures 9–10. Juvenile Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*, Israel, 8 October 2009 (Fig. 9) and Spain, 2 May 2011 (Fig. 10; Dick Forsman). Note paler upperwing-coverts, uppertail-coverts, tail and primaries, and compare with Figs. 7–8.

Circaète Jean-le-Blanc *Circaetus gallicus* juvénile, Israel, 8 octobre 2009 (Fig. 9) et Espagne, 2 mai 2011 (Fig. 10 ; Dick Forsman). Noter les couvertures sus-alaires et sus-caudales, la queue et les rémiges primaires plus pâles; comparer avec les Figs. 7–8.

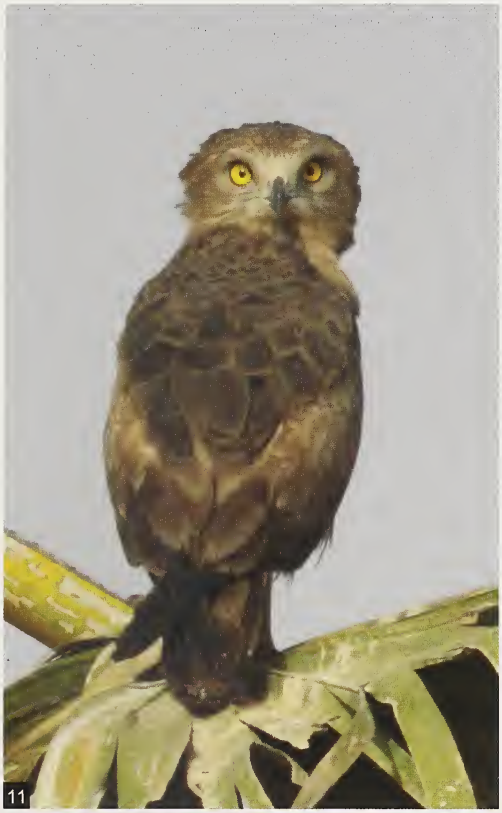
also shows much broader white tips to the remiges and rectrices than *beaudouini*, and the tail has three distinct dark bands (Figs. 7–10).

Perched. Perched juvenile *beaudouini* are dark rufous-brown (Figs. 11), with a paler brown head and upperwing-coverts contrasting with the darker underparts, remiges and back.

Juvenile *gallicus* is a much paler bird than *beaudouini* (Figs. 12), with more contrasting pale coverts and dark remiges, and a rufous-brown hood and white belly. Wingtips reach the tail tip in both.

Transition plumage

The transition of juvenile *beaudouini* into adult-plumage type is characterised by the gradual fading and replacement of the rufous-brown underparts, which become variably mottled rufous-brown



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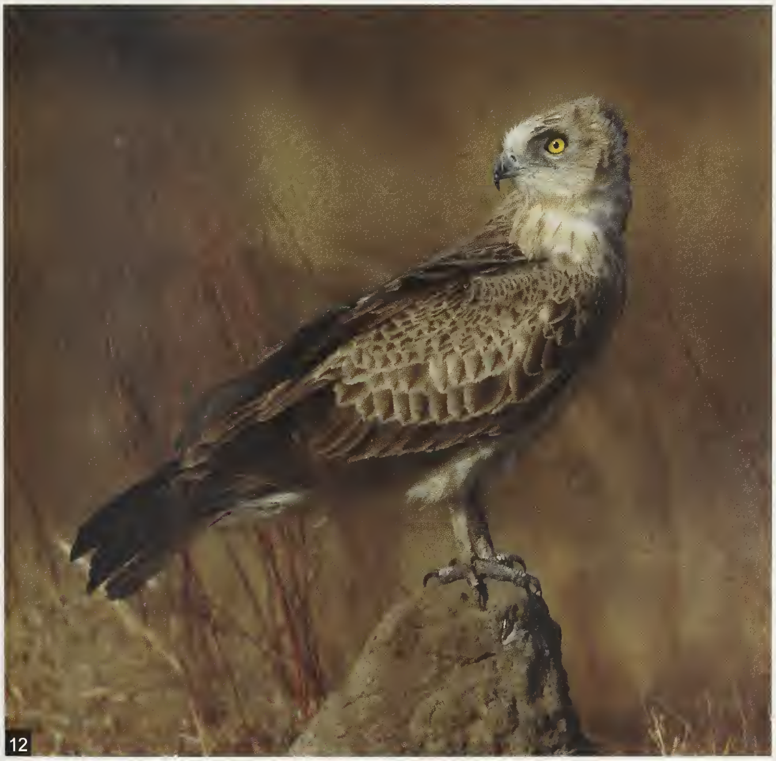
Figures 11–12. Perched juvenile Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*, Cameroon, 22 February 2009 (Fig. 11) and Short-toed Snake Eagle *C. gallicus*, Cameroon, 22 December 2007 (Fig. 12; Ralph Buij). The head and upperwing-coverts of the latter are paler than in Beaudouin's Snake Eagle.

Juvéniles perchés du Circaète de Beaudouin *Circaetus beaudouini*, Cameroun, 22 février 2009 (Fig. 11) et du Circaète Jean-le-Blanc *C. gallicus*, Cameroun, 22 décembre 2007 (Fig. 12 ; Ralph Buij). La tête et les couvertures alaires de ce dernier sont plus pâles que celles du Circaète de Beaudouin.

Figure 13. Transitional-plumage Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*, Cameroon, 25 July 2007 (Ralph Buij). The transition from juvenile to adult plumage is characterised by gradual loss of rufous-brown colour below, pale underwings with a few rufous-brown spots, and a pale head. Note that the new secondaries have adult-type barring, but there is no or hardly visible barring on the freshly moulted inner primaries.

Circaète de Beaudouin *Circaetus beaudouini* en plumage transitoire, Cameroun, 25 juillet 2007 (Ralph Buij). La transition du plumage juvénile au plumage adulte se caractérise par la perte progressive du brun-roux dessous, un dessous de l'aile pâle avec quelques taches brun-roux, et une tête claire. Noter que les nouvelles rémiges secondaires ont des barres de type adulte, mais les primaires proximales fraîchement muées sont dépourvues de barres ou, si elles en ont, elles sont à peine visibles.



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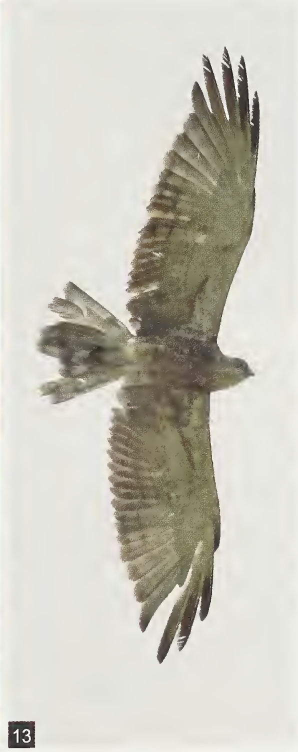

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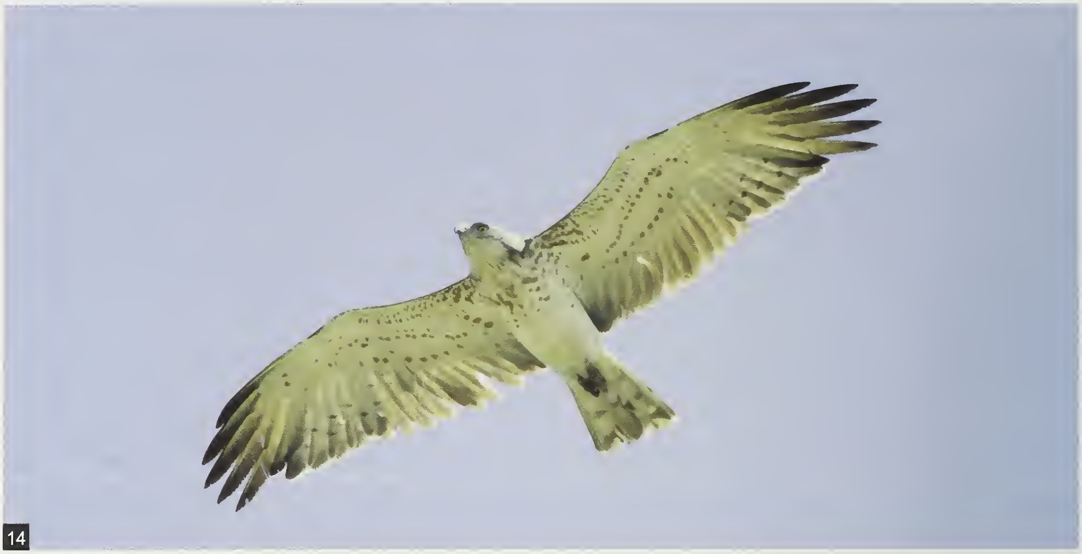
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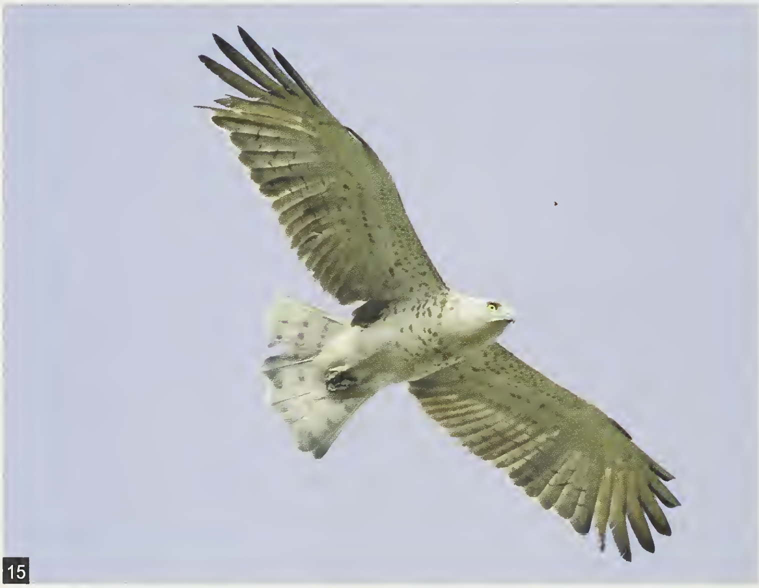
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Figures 14–15. Second-plumage Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*, Spain, 10 September 2012 (Fig. 14) and 16 September 2011 (Fig. 15; Dick Forsman). Still very similar to juveniles, with a mix of juvenile and adult-type remiges, and rufous-brown markings. Compare to Fig. 13.

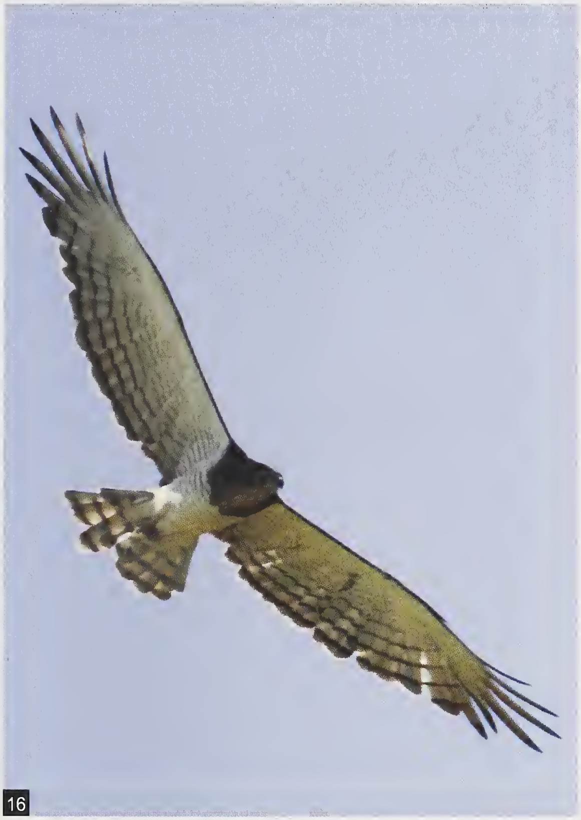
Circaète Jean-le-Blanc *Circaetus gallicus* de deuxième année, Espagne, 10 septembre 2012 (Fig. 14) et 16 septembre 2011 (Fig. 15 ; Dick Forsman). Encore très semblable aux juvéniles, avec un mélange de rémiges juvéniles et de type adulte, et des marquages brun-roux. Comparer avec la Fig. 13.

during the second year (Fig. 13), with underwing-coverts turning pale and eventually retaining only a few rufous-brown spots and a paler head. It is still readily separated from all plumages of *gallicus*, which never shows the combination of pale underwing-coverts with dark rufous-brown mottling and paler head. During the course of the first complete moult, immatures change gradually to become more like adults.

In *gallicus* second-plumage-type birds are still rather similar to juveniles, with a characteristic mix of juvenile and more adult-type remiges (*cf.* Forsman 1998: 160; Figs. 14–15). The majority of second-plumage-type birds are actively moulting on the winter grounds in sub-Saharan Africa, with replaced inner primaries but retained juvenile outer primaries and most juvenile secondaries on arrival in September–October.

Adults

Underparts. Adult *beaudouini* are white below, with a brownish-grey head and upper breast, and fine barring on the lower breast, belly, flanks and undertail-coverts, less extensively or absent on the thighs and vent in some (Figs. 16–17) but not all individuals (Figs.18–19). Some adults



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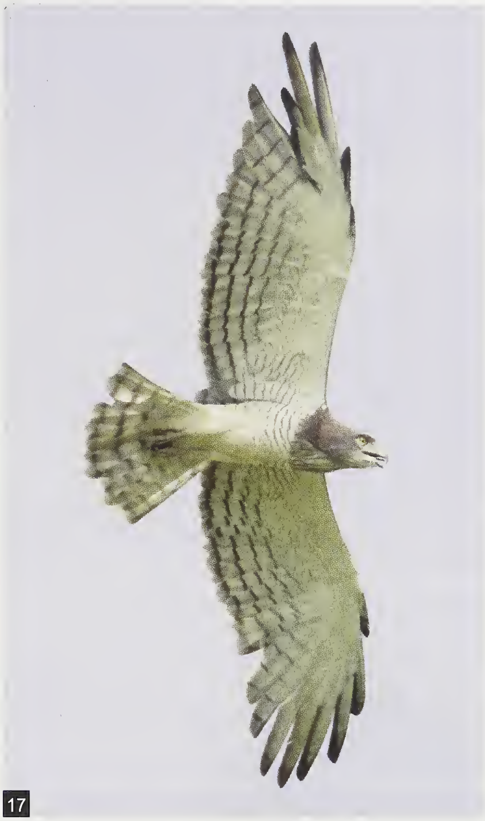

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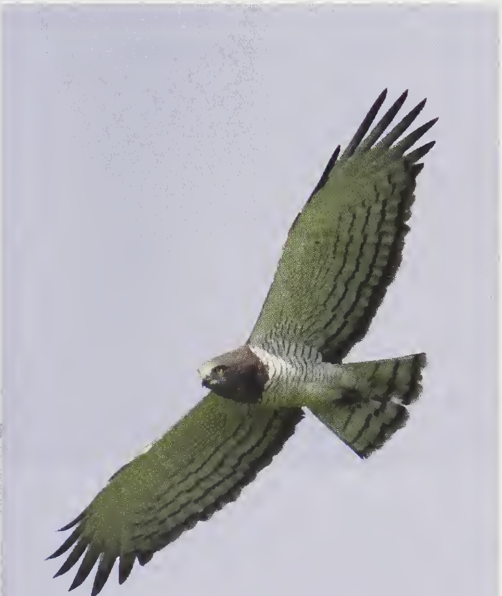

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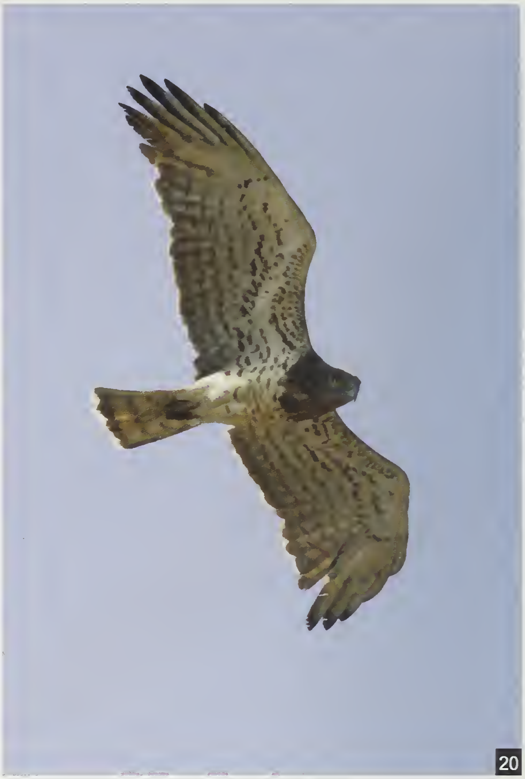
Figures 16–17. Adult Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*, Cameroon, 20 July 2008 (Fig. 16) and 25 September 2009 (Fig. 17; Ralph Buij). Note clean overall impression. The contrasting narrow bars on the remiges and grey-brown head distinguish these birds from Short-toed Snake Eagle *C. gallicus*. Also, fine bars on underparts rather than blotches as in Short-toed Snake Eagle.

Circaète de Beaudouin *Circaetus beaudouini* adulte, Cameroun, 20 juillet 2008 (Fig. 16) et 25 septembre 2009 (Fig. 17 ; Ralph Buij). Noter l'impression générale nette. Ces oiseaux se distinguent du Circaète Jean-le-Blanc *C. gallicus* par les nettes barres étroites sur les rémiges et la tête brun-gris. De plus, le dessous a de fines barres plutôt que des taches.

Figures 18–19. Adult Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*, Cameroon, 27 August 2006 (Fig. 18) and 2 August 2008 (Fig. 19; Ralph Buij). Typical adults with solid dark grey-brown hood and fine barring on underparts. Adults usually appear narrower winged than adult Short-toed Snake Eagles *C. gallicus* (*cf.* Figs. 16–17 and 20–21).

Circaète de Beaudouin *Circaetus beaudouini* adulte, Cameroun, 27 août 2006 (Fig. 18) et 2 août 2008 (Fig. 19 ; Ralph Buij). Adultes typiques avec un capuchon plein brun-gris foncé et le dessous finement barré. Les ailes des adultes apparaissent géneralement plus étroites que celles des adultes du Circaète Jean-le-Blanc *C. gallicus* (*cf.* Figs. 16–17 et 20–21).



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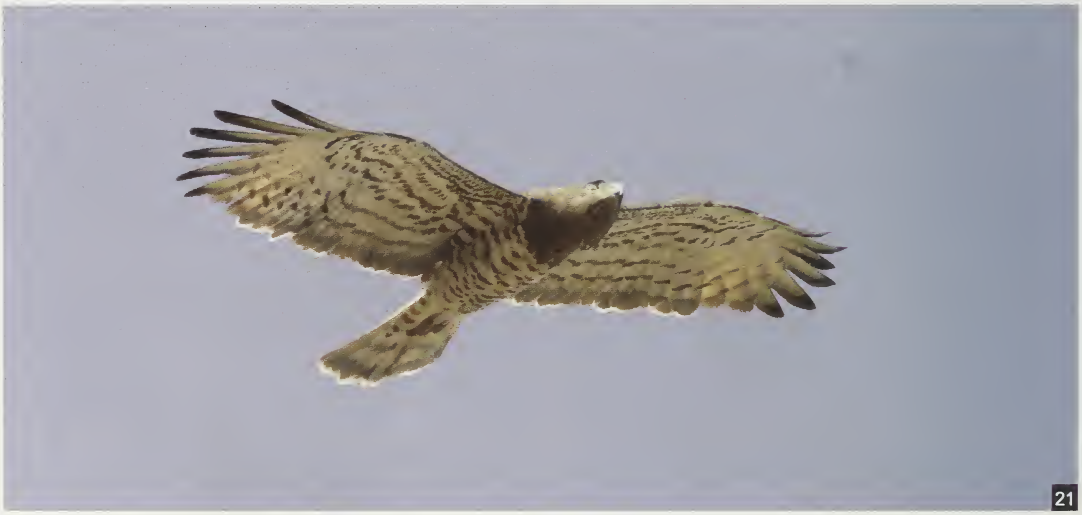

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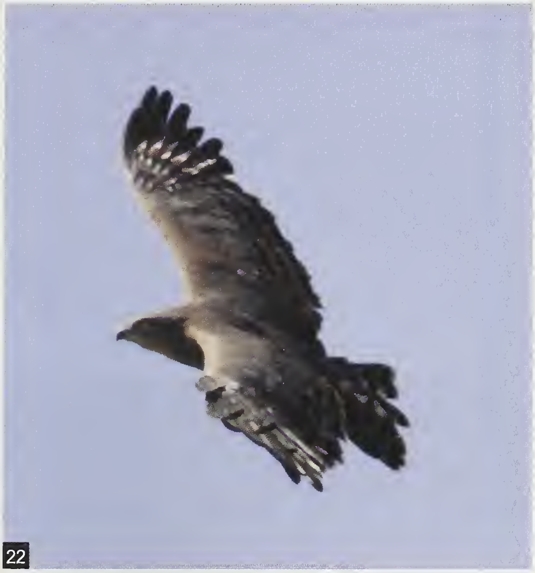
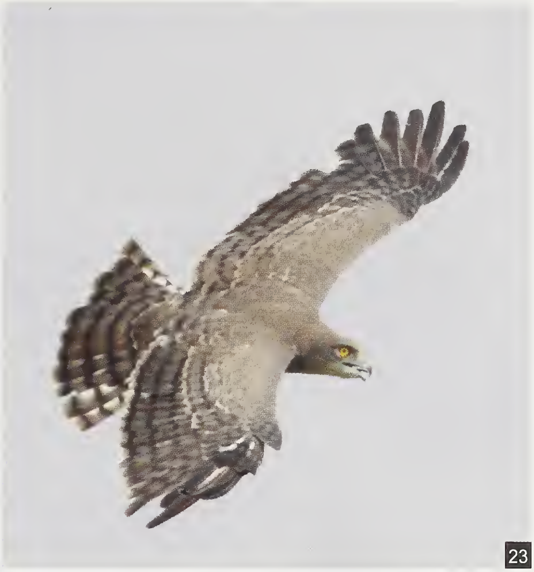
Figures 20–21. Adult Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*, Spain, 7 September 2007 (Fig. 20) and Cameroon, 29 December 2006 (Fig. 21; Ralph Buij). Adults are more heavily marked below than juveniles, typically blotched rather than barred and more irregularly marked compared to narrower winged Beaudouin's Snake Eagle. Also note browner coloration and less contrasting brown hood and barring on remiges than Beaudouin's Snake Eagle (*cf.* Figs. 18–19).

Circaète Jean-le-Blanc *Circaetus gallicus* adulte, Espagne, 7 septembre 2007 (Fig. 20) et Cameroun, 29 décembre 2006 (Fig. 21 ; Ralph Buij). Les adultes ont le dessous plus fortement marqué que les juvéniles et sont généralement tachetés plutôt que barrés et plus irrégulièrement marqués comparés aux adultes du Circaète de Beaudouin *C. beaudouini*, qui ont les ailes plus étroites. Noter également la coloration plus brune, et le capuchon brun et les barres sur les rémiges moins contrastées que chez le Circaète de Beaudouin (*cf.* Figs. 18–19).





Figures 22–23. Adult Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*, Cameroon, 15 April 2010 (Fig. 22) and 2 August 2008 (Fig. 23; Ralph Buij). The upperparts are uniformly dark grey-brown, with narrow but distinct barring and a small white margin on wings and tail.

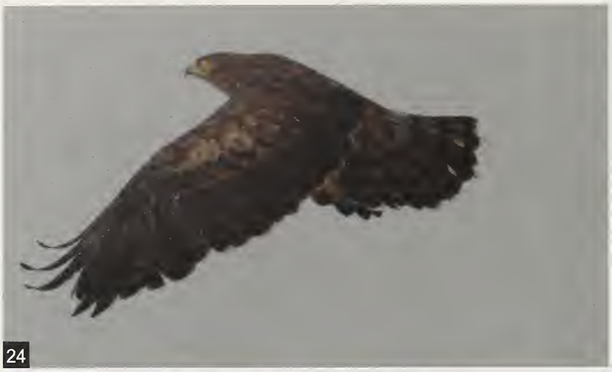
Circaète de Beaudouin *Circaetus beaudouini* adulte, Cameroun, 15 avril 2010 (Fig. 22) et 2 août 2008 (Fig. 23 ; Ralph Buij). Le dessus est uniformément brun-gris foncé, barré finement mais distinctement sur les ailes et la queue, qui sont étroitement bordées de blanc.

only possess barring on the axillaries and flanks. Similarly, some adults have a more solid hood, whereas others have streaks on a pale upper breast and throat (Figs. 16–19). The axillaries, greater and median coverts also have fine dark barring, whereas the lesser coverts are unmarked. Due to moult, worn and fresh feathers occur side by side, often producing a ragged trailing edge to the wings and tail. Remiges and rectrices have four narrow bands, with a slightly broader subterminal band; pp6–10 lack barring as in juveniles. The 'fingers' are dark-tipped. All in all, the adult plumage of *beaudouini* looks typically very clean, with distinct and regular fine markings, lacking the somewhat 'scruffy' look of adult *gallicus*, owing to the latter's bolder and more irregular plumage markings. Adult *gallicus* is also broader winged than *beaudouini* (Figs. 20–21), more so than juveniles, from which they are separated by the presence of differently aged remiges. Finally, adult *gallicus* are more heavily marked, with broader barring on the remiges and a more distinct broad trailing edge to the wings and tail than juveniles, while the grey-brown hood has lost any hint of rufous coloration and may be more or less complete.

Upperparts. Adult *beaudouini* lack the contrast on the upperwing of juveniles (Figs. 22–23), and have dark grey-brown coverts and slightly darker remiges. Greater coverts also retain pale tips, but less conspicuously so than in juveniles, and are hardly visible in some adults. Unlike in *gallicus*, the greater coverts are clearly barred in close views. The wings and tail have three clear bands of similar width.

The wings of adult *gallicus* retain a pale trailing edge as in juveniles, but the pale brown upperwing-coverts contrast less with the darker remiges (Figs. 24–25); still, the contrast is much more evident, particularly at a distance, compared to adult *beaudouini*. Adults have only vague barring on the remiges, compared to the bold barring in adult *beaudouini* (compare Figs. 22–25). Also, the tail has fewer and broader bands than *beaudouini*, the subterminal band is broader and the fanned tail becomes clearly paler towards the edges.

Perched. A perched *beaudouini* is dark grey-brown overall (Fig. 26), lacking contrast between the coverts and remiges, unlike the browner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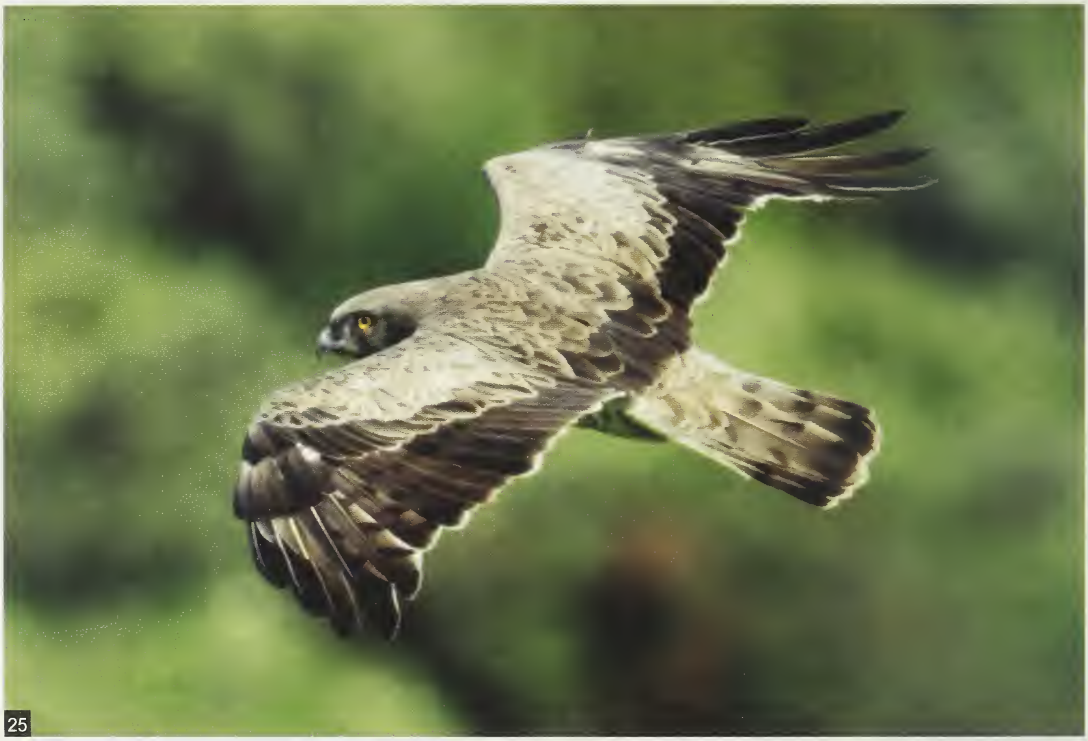
Figures 24–25. Adult Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*, Cameroon, 13 January 2007 (Fig. 24; Ralph Buij) and Spain, 28 April 2011 (Fig. 25; Dick Forsman). Compare with more uniform grey-brown upperparts of adult Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *C. beaudouini* (Figs. 22–23).

Circaète Jean-le-Blanc *Circaetus gallicus* adulte, Cameroun, 13 janvier 2007 (Fig. 24; Ralph Buij) et Espagne, 28 avril 2011 (Fig. 25 ; Dick Forsman). Comparer avec le dessus plus uniformément brun-gris chez l'adulte du Circaète de Beaudouin *C. beaudouini* (Figs. 22–23).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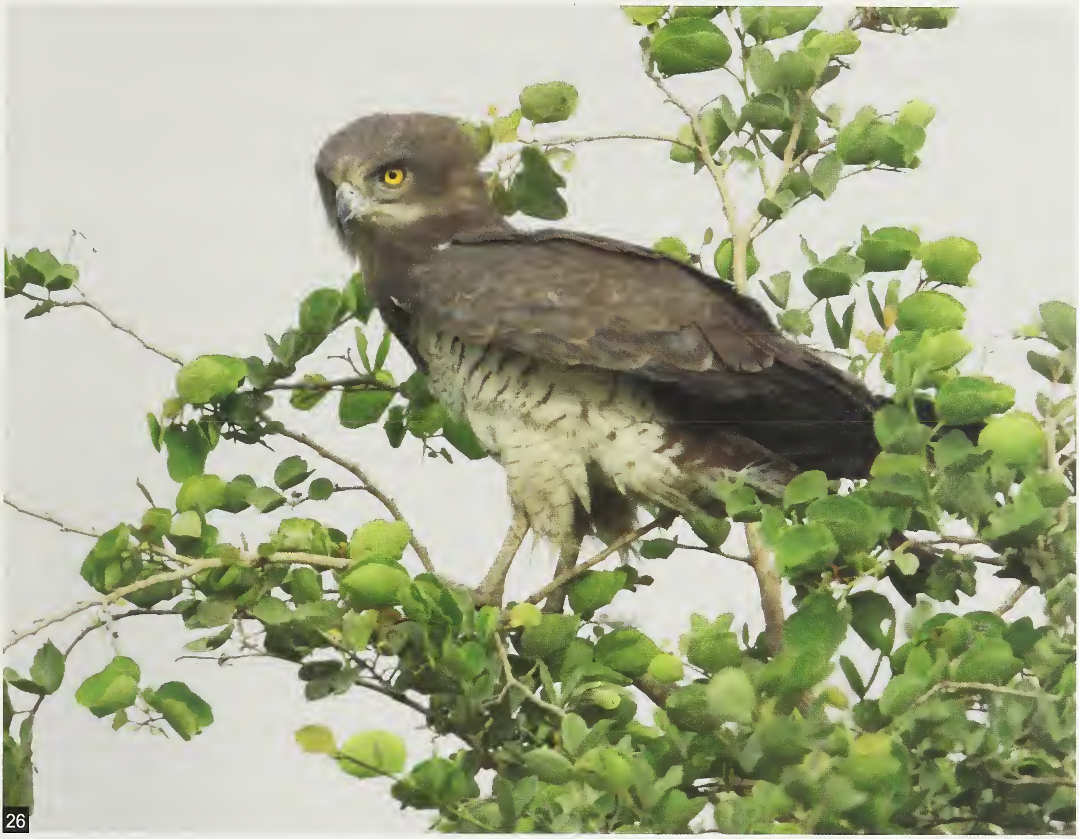
juveniles. The barred greater coverts are often quite conspicuous.

Adult *gallicus* has pale brown coverts contrasting with dark remiges (Fig. 27), but less so than juveniles. Most have a brownish-grey hood and broad blotching on the underparts, versus fine barring on the underparts of adult *beaudouini*.

Discussion

We reiterate previous statements that separation of Beaudouin's Snake Eagle and Short-toed Snake Eagle is straightforward (Clark 2000), and claims of 'intermediate' or indistinguishable birds in the field have probably been mostly based on the lack of decent illustrations in field guides rather than anything else. The illustrations of these species in Ferguson-Lees & Christie (2001) and regional handbooks such as Borrow & Demey (2001) marked a significant improvement on previous handbooks and guides, some of which erroneously illustrated adults of both species as very closely resembling each other in coloration and markings (e.g. del Hoyo *et al.* 1994). However, the illustrations lack important and useful details that aid identification. For example, those in Borrow & Demey (2001) show almost uniformly dark brown adults in both species (upperparts are paler brown in Short-toed, grey-brown in Beaudouin's;



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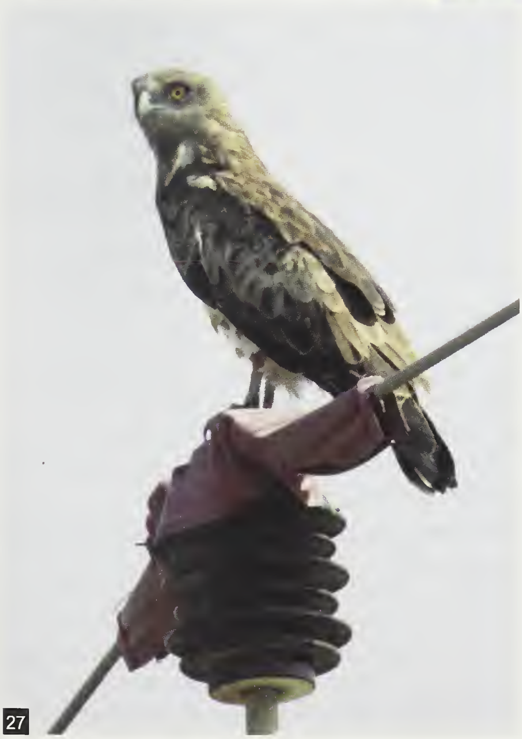

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Figures 26–27. Perched adult Beaudouin's *Circaetus beaudouini*, Cameroon, 15 April 2010 (Fig. 26; Ralph Buij) and Short-toed Snake Eagles *C. gallicus*, Israel, 7 October 2009 (Fig. 27; Dick Forsman). Adult Beaudouin's Snake Eagle is uniformly dark grey-brown on the upperparts, versus contrasting sandy-brown coverts of Short-toed Snake Eagle.

Adultes perchés du Circaète de Beaudouin *Circaetus beaudouini*, Cameroon, 15 avril 2010 (Fig. 26; Ralph Buij) et Jean-le-Blanc *C. gallicus*, Israel, 7 octobre 2009 (Fig. 27 ; Dick Forsman). Le Circaète de Beaudouin a le dessus uniformément brun-gris foncé, tandis que le Jean-le-Blanc a les couvertures alaires brun-sable contrastantes.

cf. Figs. 26–27), which differ mainly in the width and extent of markings on the underparts, while juvenile Beaudouin's are depicted with dark-brown upperparts lacking paler coverts. The flight illustrations in Ferguson-Lees & Christie (2001) show adult Beaudouin's with a paler brown (not grey-brown) hood than Short-toed Snake Eagle. Also, we have never observed the uniform 'largely whitish' post-juvenile plumage of Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, with whitish upperwing-coverts depicted in Ferguson-Lees & Christie (2001), which they reported to occur in the second and into the third year. Rather, individuals in their second year appear to always retain a variable number of rufous-brown markings, replaced during the second year by a more adult-like hooded appearance and finely barred underparts. Other field guides have also shown or described pale subadults with a completely whitish head and underparts (Kemp & Kemp 1998), or even pale juveniles (del Hoyo *et al.* 1994), but as pointed out by Clark (1999), these were probably based on a misidentified specimen of a juvenile Short-toed Snake Eagle in the collection of the Natural History Museum, Tring.

Ornithologists and birdwatchers are increasingly finding Beaudouin's Snake Eagle east of Chad and Sudan, in west and north-west Uganda (rather common: DF pers. obs.) and western Kenya (Clark *et al.* 2005; C. Jackson *in Bull. ABC* 20: 98, 2013), i.e. east of the distribution often depicted (Kemp & Kemp 1998, Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001, but see del Hoyo *et al.* 1994). As such, the winter range of *gallicus* appears to almost completely overlap with the range of *beaudouini*. However, in these eastern parts of the distribution, confusion of *beaudouini* with Black-chested Snake Eagle *C. pectoralis*, both as adults and juveniles, is a much more relevant concern.

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Birds of the Boé region, south-east Guinea-Bissau, including the first country records of Chestnut-backed Sparrow Lark *Eremopterix leucotis*, Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica* and Heuglin's Wheatear *Oenanthe heuglini*

João L. Guilherme

Aves da região do Boé, sudeste da Guiné-Bissau, incluindo registos de três novas espécies para o país. Durante os meses de janeiro e fevereiro de 2013 foi levado a cabo um levantamento da avifauna no sector do Boé, sudeste da Guiné-Bissau. Este trabalho permitiu identificar um total de 170 espécies de aves, das quais, três constituem novos registos para o país: cotovia-pardal-de-dorso-castanho *Eremopterix leucotis*, andorinha-estriada-pequena *Cecropis abyssinica* e chasco de Heuglin *Oenanthe heuglini*. Vinte e três das espécies registadas encontram-se restritas ao bioma de savana Sudano-Guineense, doze são restritas ao bioma de floresta Guineo-Congolense e cinco são espécies prioritárias para a conservação. Este constitui o primeiro levantamento da avifauna desta região da Guiné-Bissau. São também apresentados registos efectuados na região por P. Wit durante 2007–13. O sector do Boé é dominado por diversos habitats de savana e alberga uma elevada diversidade de fauna e flora. Um projecto para a criação de dois parques nacionais e três corredores para a fauna está a ser implementado na região. No entanto, os actuais usos dos solos e recursos naturais constituem potenciais importantes ameaças à preservação da biodiversidade e dos serviços dos ecossistemas do sector do Boé.

Summary. During an ornithological survey of the Boé region, south-east Guinea-Bissau, in January and February 2013, 170 bird species were recorded. Of these, three were new for the country: Chestnut-backed Sparrow Lark *Eremopterix leucotis*, Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica* and Heuglin's Wheatear *Oenanthe heuglini*. Twenty-three species are restricted to the Sudan-Guinea Savanna biome, 12 to the Guinean-Congo Forest biome and five are of global conservation concern. This was the first avifaunal survey in the area. Additional bird observations made by P. Wit in 2007–13 are also presented. The Boé region is dominated by a variety of savanna habitats and harbours very interesting biodiversity. A project to establish two national parks and three wildlife corridors is being implemented. However, current uses of land and natural resources constitute potentially important threats to the biodiversity and ecosystem services, and require urgent attention.

The avifauna of Guinea-Bissau is amongst the least known on the African continent. Its ornithological importance is mostly related to the country's coastal-marine biome, a vast area that harbours *c.*1 million Palearctic waders during the boreal winter (Robertson 2001), of which the Bijagós Archipelago is probably the most important (Dodman & Sá 2005). However, Guinea-Bissau terrestrial ecosystems are also regionally and globally important for their avian diversity and conservation value, and include 35 bird species restricted to the Sudan-Guinea Savanna biome and 58 to the Guinea-Congo Forest biome (Dodman *et al.* 2004). Guinea-Bissau currently lacks inland reserves. This is of concern as ongoing human population growth is increasing pressure on natural habitats, primarily for agricultural use and associated intensification (Cincotta *et al.* 2000), factors recognised as major threats to biodiversity worldwide (Pereira *et al.* 2012). Cashew tree plantations, which constitute the main economy of the country (World Bank 2009), have increased considerably in recent years at the expense of natural forests (Oom *et al.* 2009).

In 2010, the government engaged in a project aiming to conserve representative terrestrial ecosystems, particularly within the forest belt, in partnership with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (PRODOC 2010). The project plans to establish five protected areas in the south-east: Dulombi and Boé National Parks, and three corridors for fauna (Fig. 1). These include areas of both regional and national ornithological importance. Dulombi is considered to be the most biodiverse region in Guinea-Bissau and is an Important Bird Area (IBA) harbouring 202 bird species and a variety of mammals, including ten primate, 13 carnivore and 17 ungulate species (Limoges 1989, Pacheco *et al.* 1997, Dodman *et al.* 2004). Although part of the Boé region is also an IBA, largely based on the Vendu Tcham wetland in the west (Fig. 1), ornithological data from other areas were lacking (Dodman *et al.* 2004).

Here I provide information on the avifauna of the Boé region during the dry-season months of January–February 2013, with additional records made by Piet Wit (PW) during his regular visits to the area since 2007. I also briefly discuss the current threats to, and conservation prospects for, the region. The study was undertaken on behalf of Foundation Chimbo, a Dutch NGO (http://www.chimbo.org) that cooperates with the local NGO Daridibó (http://www.daridibo.org). Both organisations have been active in the Boé region since 2007, implementing a community-based conservation programme primarily aimed to conserve Western Chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes verus* and its habitat, by integrating nature conservation and ecotourism into local development plans as a potential source of revenue for the local population.

Study area

The Boé is a remote region in south-eastern Guinea-Bissau (13°56'W 11°50'N), extending over *c*.3,000 km^2 between the Corubal River and the Guinea border (Fig. 1). It is almost devoid of driveable roads and basic infrastructure, and is sparsely inhabited. The local population practices subsistence agriculture, hunting and gathering. The Fula constitutes the main ethnic group; they have a detailed knowledge of their environment and are traditionally engaged in the sustainable use of natural habitats and wildlife.

Compared to the rest of the country, the area is characterised by higher rainfall and shallow soils (Catarino *et al.* 2008), with a mean annual rainfall of 1,600–2,100 mm and temperature of 28°C. The dry season commences in October and lasts until the end of May; April is the hottest month averaging 29°C. The area covers the main forest-savanna belt of Guinea-Bissau. The dominant vegetation is that of the Sudan-Guinea Savanna biome, comprising a variety of dry and semi-dry habitats (see Wit & Reinjtes 1989 for further details). The landscape is dominated by wooded savanna interspersed by more open areas of shrub and grassland maintained by frequent fires set by shepherds and hunters (Catarino 2004). Slash-and-burn agriculture for rice and other crops is widespread around villages. Cleared land is cultivated for one or two seasons, after which it is left fallow. Savanna woodlands are typically 'edge-like' (i.e. open); the commonest tree species include *Pterocarpus erinaceus*, *Crossopteryx febrifuga*, *Parkia biglobosa* and *Terminalia albida*, with *Combretum glutinosum* the most frequently occurring shrub (Wit & Reinjtes 1989, Catarino *et al.* 2008). Along rivers and streams remnants of gallery forest remain, which include mostly evergreen trees such as *Sterculia tragacantha*, *Ceiba pentandra*, *Pterocarpus* spp. and *Afzelia africana*. A large freshwater lake, Vendu Tcham, in the west of the region (Fig. 1), supports a variety of waterbirds (Rodwell 1996, Pacheco *et al.* 1997).

Methods

Field work was conducted on 16–22 January 2013 and 4–15 February 2013, which corresponds to the middle of the dry season. Bird surveys were undertaken in the environs of three villages (*tabancas*): Béli (the only *tabanca* in the region with tourism facilities), Pataque and Lugajole (Fig. 1). The study area is located in the central Boé, just south of the proposed Boé National Park. Bird surveys were conducted during the first five hours after dawn and three hours before dusk, via walked transects, totalling *c*.100 km, along existing tracks through various habitats. Whenever the vegetation was too dense to permit normal progression, e.g. within some gallery forests, randomly sited ten-minute point counts were employed. All birds seen were recorded and habitat was registered. Some drives along transects were undertaken at night to record nocturnal species. The main field guide used was Borrow & Demey (2001), but Sinclair & Ryan (2003) was also consulted. The xeno-canto website (http://www.xeno-canto.org) was consulted for bird vocalisations. No playback was used.

Results

A total of 170 bird species was recorded during the surveys. Including records by P. Wit in 2007–13, the number of species known from this part of the Boé totals 188. Given that the

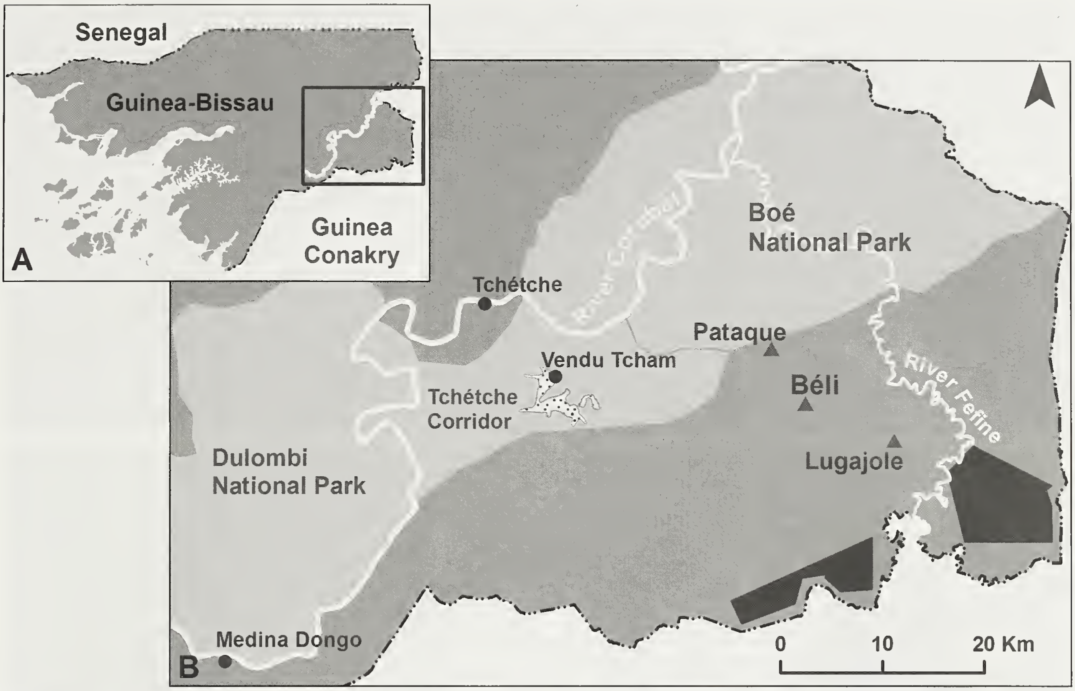

Figure 1. (**A**) Location of the Boé region, south-east Guinea-Bissau; (**B**) Map of Boé showing the villages of Béli, Pataque and Lugajole, those of Tchétche and Medina Dongo visited by Rodwell (1996) in 1992, and Vendu Tcham wetland. The prospected Dulombi and Boé National Parks and the Tchétche corridor for fauna are represented in pale grey, bauxite mining concessions areas in dark grey (limits according to Cassamá 2009).

study was conducted over a short period in the dry season, further surveys, particularly during the wet season (mid June to October), should increase that total. For example, Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii* was recorded by PW in July, and Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis* is regularly seen (Boé villagers pers. comm.). In the dry season of 1992, Rodwell (1996) visited the villages of Tchétche and Medina Dongo along the Corubal River in the west and south-west of the region for five days (28 March–1 April), reporting 70 species, of which 23 were not detected by the present survey. Adding Rodwell's observations, the Boé region supports 208 bird species, or *c*.41% of the 508 species listed for the country by Dodman *et al.* (2004).

In total, 23 species of diurnal raptors (Accipitridae, Pandionidae and Falconidae) have been recorded since 2007. These include five species of global conservation concern, three of them classified as Endangered (Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*, White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* and Rüppell's Vulture *G. rueppellii*), one Vulnerable (Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*; Fig. 2) and one Near Threatened

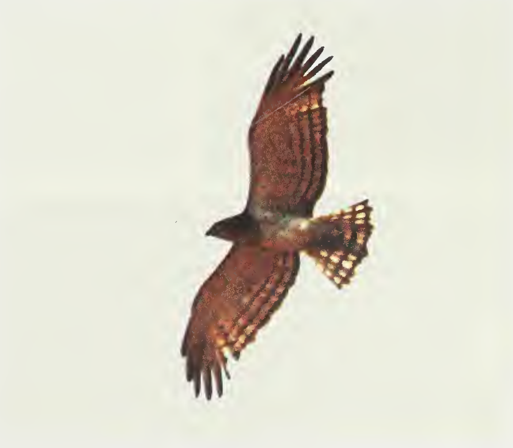

Figure 2. Beaudouin's Snake Eagle / Guincho da Guiné *Circaetus beaudouini*, Lugajole, Boé, Guinea-Bissau, 14 February 2013 (João L. Guilherme)

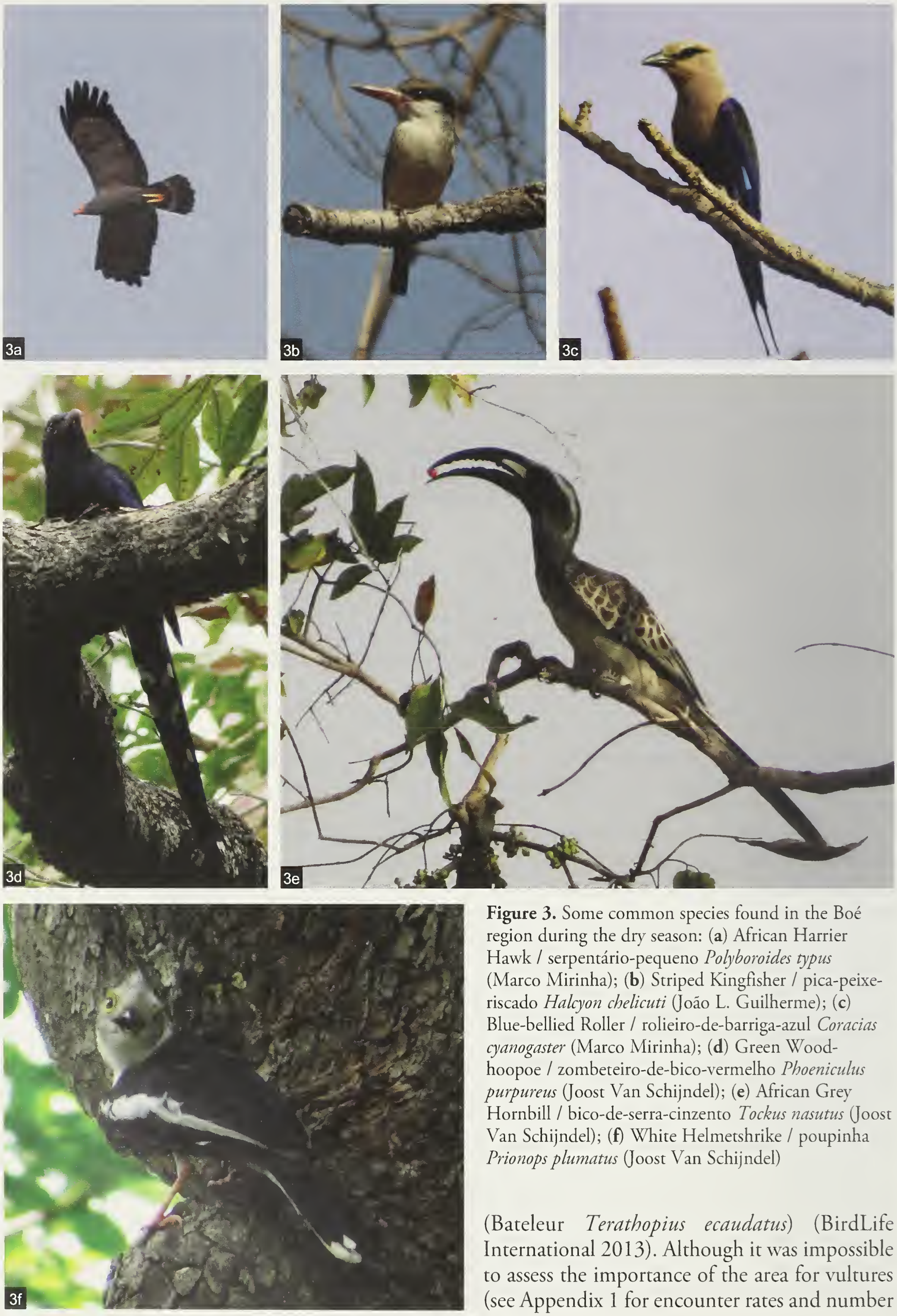

Figure 3. Some common species found in the Boé region during the dry season: (**a**) African Harrier Hawk / serpentário-pequeno *Polyboroides typus* (Marco Mirinha); (**b**) Striped Kingfisher / pica-peixe-riscado *Halcyon chelicuti* (João L. Guilherme); (**c**) Blue-bellied Roller / rolieiro-de-barriga-azul *Coracias cyanogaster* (Marco Mirinha); (**d**) Green Wood-hoopoe / zombeteiro-de-bico-vermelho *Phoeniculus purpureus* (Joost Van Schijndel); (**e**) African Grey Hornbill / bico-de-serra-cinzento *Tockus nasutus* (Joost Van Schijndel); (**f**) White Helmetshrike / poupinha *Prionops plumatus* (Joost Van Schijndel)

(Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*) (BirdLife International 2013). Although it was impossible to assess the importance of the area for vultures (see Appendix 1 for encounter rates and number of individuals recorded), the fairly high densities of large wild mammals suggest that the area is significant year-round for these scavengers.

Twenty-three species restricted to the Sudan-Guinea Savanna biome were recorded during my surveys (Appendix 1), or 43% of the total species restricted to this biome (Fishpool & Evans 2001). Black-faced Firefinch *Lagonosticta larvata* (also a Sudan-Guinea Savanna biome-restricted species) was previously recorded in the region in November 2009 (Appendix 1). In Guinea-Bissau, only the nearby Dulombi IBA has more species restricted to this biome (25; Dodman *et al.* 2004). Although the study area is dominated by savanna habitats, 12 bird species restricted to the Guinea-Congo Forest biome were found (Appendix 1), mostly in gallery forest along rivers and seasonal streams, and included Red-thighed Sparrowhawk *Accipiter erythropus*, Turati's Boubou *Laniarius turatii*, Black-winged Oriole *Oriolus nigripennis*, Forest Chestnut-winged Starling *Onychognathus fulgidus* and Chestnut-breasted Negrofinch *Nigrita bicolor*.

Common species in savannas included Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur afer*, Black-billed Wood Dove *T. abyssinicus*, Vinaceous Dove *Streptopelia vinacea*, African Grey Hornbill *Tockus nasutus*, Sun Lark *Galerida modesta*, Common Wattle-eye *Platysteira cyanea*, Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus*, Northern Puffback *Dryoscopus gambensis*, Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis* and Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus bengalus*. Also common were mixed flocks of Ploceidae of up to 400 birds, mostly comprising Village Weavers *Ploceus cucullatus*, Red-billed Queleas *Quelea quelea*, Black-winged Bishops *Euplectes hordeaceus* and Northern Red Bishops *E. franciscanus*. Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*, African Grey Hornbill *Tockus nasutus* and a variety of waxbills (Estrildidae), including flocks of up to 80 Orange-cheeked Waxbills *Estrilda melpoda*, were common in cultivation. In forests along streams and gallery forests, common species included Green Turaco *Tauraco persa*, Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone rufiventer* and Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura*. In villages, Violet Turaco *Tauraco* (= *Musophaga*) *violaceus*, Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus* and Beautiful Sunbird *Cinnyris pulchellus* were common (see Appendix 1).

Proof of breeding was noted only for Red-chested Swallow *Hirundo lucida* and Beautiful Sunbird *Cinnyris pulchellus*, with pairs seen nest building. Behaviour indicative of breeding was observed for Black-bellied Bustard *Eupodotis melanogaster*, African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus*, Turati's Boubou and African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*, among others.

Finally, two bee-eaters that may have been Blue-moustached Bee-eaters *Merops mentalis* were observed by PW in December 2010. However, as this would constitute a substantial westward range extension, this species' presence requires confirmation.

Species new to Guinea-Bissau

Chestnut-backed Sparrow Lark *Eremopterix leucotis*

A male and female were observed for *c.*10 minutes on 20 January 2013 by myself and F. Leitão (Daridibó staff) in an open area with bare ground near Béli (11°51'N 13°55'W). The male, which was chasing the female, had a contrasting black-and-white head pattern, black breast and deep chestnut upperparts. The female had a dark-mottled head and chestnut wings. Common throughout much of its large African range and known from neighbouring Senegal and Guinea (Borrow & Demey 2001, Dowsett *et al.* 2013c, g).

Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica*

Six on 13 February 2013 within a mixed flock comprising eight Red-breasted Swallows *Cecropis semirufa*, 12 Pied-winged Swallows *Hirundo leucosoma* and ten Red-chested Swallows *H. lucida*, over Lugajole (11°48'N 13°51'W). Easily identified by its streaked underparts, rufous head and rump, and long tail streamers. Widespread south of the Sahel and Guinea-Bissau is the only country in the region where the species had not been documented (Borrow & Demey 2001, Dowsett *et al.* 2013a–i).

Heuglin's Wheatear *Oenanthe heuglini*

One singing and displaying in recently burnt grassland near Lugajole (11°48'N 13°52'W) on 14 February 2013 (Fig. 4). It was conspicuously long-legged and adopted an erect posture, with a very broad black terminal tail band. Isabelline Wheatear *O. isabellina*, with which I am familiar

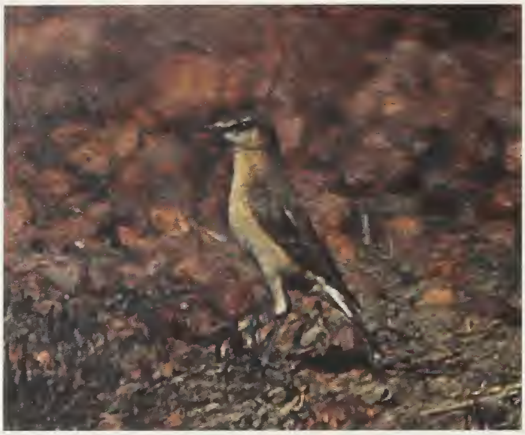

Figure 4. Heuglin's Wheatear / chasco de Heuglin *Oenanthe heuglini*, Boé, Guinea-Bissau, 14 February 2013 (João L. Guilherme)

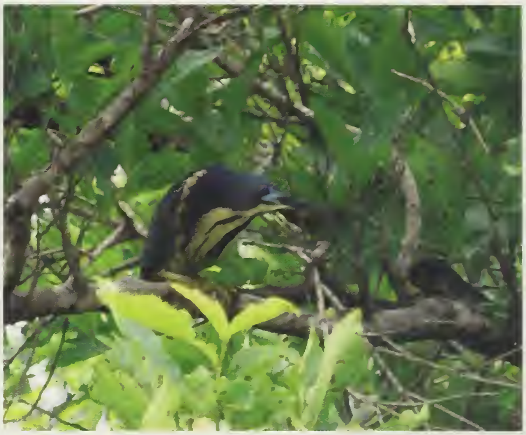

Figure 5. Dwarf Bittern / garçote-preto *Ixobrychus sturmii*, Boé, Guinea-Bissau, 14 July 2011 (Piet Wit)

in Central Asia, has a similar display flight, but could immediately be eliminated, as the bird was smaller, with overall darker plumage and a rufous-buff breast. Intra-African migrant between the Sahel and Sudan-Guinean Savanna (Borrow & Demey 2001), in neighbouring countries it has been recorded only in Guinea and Mali (Dowsett *et al.* 2013c, f).

Notes on selected species

Species of conservation concern (BirdLife International 2013) are indicated by EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable and NT = Near Threatened.

Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii*
Three singles observed along the Béli–Tchétche road in 14 July 2011, one of them near a temporary pool (Fig. 5). The species, which is known from all neighbouring countries (Barlow *et al.* 1997, Borrow & Demey 2001), is not included in the ABC Guinea-Bissau checklist (Dowsett *et al.* 2013d). However, it is listed for Ilha de Bolama and Rio Grande de Buba IBA by Dodman *et al.* (2004), based on a record at Buba in February 1997 (B. de Bruijn & K. de Jong *in litt.* 2003).

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus* EN
Often associated with human settlements and frequently observed foraging on rubbish. Approximately 40 roosted in trees near Béli on 17 January. Other observations included 1–11 soaring over a variety of habitats. Only two were seen in Madina Dongo in the 1990s (Rodwell 1996). The species is apparently not persecuted or poisoned here, unlike elsewhere in Africa (Ogada & Buij 2011).

White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus* EN
One soaring over Béli on 21 January 2013, with 11 Hooded and three Rüppell's Vultures *Gyps rueppellii*. One found dead (cause of death unknown) by Daridibó staff in January 2013. Tall trees, providing roosting and potential nest sites, and good populations of large wild mammals may constitute important resources for the species in the study area.

Rüppell's Vulture *Gyps rueppellii* EN
Three adults soaring over Béli on 21 January 2013, with 11 Hooded Vultures and a White-backed Vulture.

Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini* VU
Three records: one near Vendu Tcham (11°51'20"N 14°07'30"W) on 22 January 2013, one north-west of Béli (11°52'18"N 13°54'44"W) on 11 February, and one over Lugajole (13°51'25"N 11°48'34"W; Fig. 2) on 14 February.

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* NT
Singles near Pataque on 7 January 2013, near Vendu Tcham on 15 January, north-east of Béli

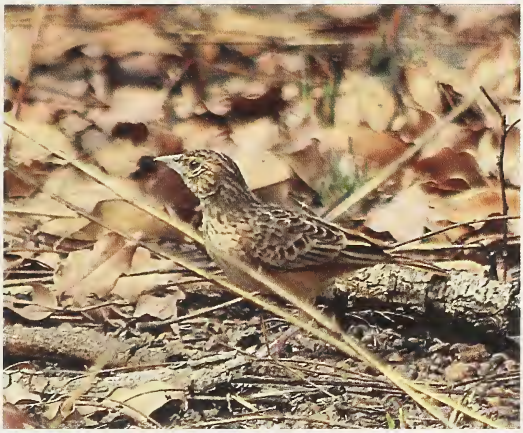

Figure 6. Flappet Lark / cotovia-zumbidora *Mirafra rufocinnamomea*, Boé, Guinea-Bissau, 5 February 2013 (João L. Guilherme)

on 11 and, probably the same individual, 12 February.

Red-thighed Sparrowhawk *Accipiter erythropus*
Two (possibly a pair) in savanna woodland near Béli on 19 January 2013. Restricted to the Guinea-Congo Forest biome, with scattered records in Guinea-Bissau and neighbouring countries (Borrow & Demey 2001).

African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis*
Juvenile observed by PW along the Corubal River, *c.*100 m downstream of Tchétche (11°55'N 14°12'W) on 1 May 2008. Although regarded as shy (Sinclair & Ryan 2003), this bird did not seem disturbed by the presence of people and a ferry. Dodman *et al.* (2004) include this species on the list for Vendu Tcham IBA, based on two sightings in 1997 at Tchétche during different seasons (R. Matías *in litt.* 2004). Occurs in neighbouring Senegal and Guinea, and Gambia (Dowsett *et al.* 2013c, g, i).

Senegal Parrot *Poicephalus senegalus*
Pairs observed at Béli on 17 January 2013, over grassland near Béli on 20 January, and over savanna woodland near Pataque on 7 February. Not considered threatened and population appears stable, perhaps even benefiting from clearance of closed-canopy forests (BirdLife International 2013). However, it is frequently kept as a cagebird and subject to significant poaching for the pet trade, and is therefore listed in Annex II of CITES as of 'possible concern' (Inskipp *et al.* 1988).

Flappet Lark *Mirafra rufocinnamomea*
One photographed north of Béli on 5 February 2013 (Fig. 6). Four performing display flights accompanied by characteristic wing rattling in a recently burnt grassland near Lugajole on 14 February. Although not listed in the ABC checklist (Dowsett *et al.* 2013d), it has previously been recorded in Guinea-Bissau (Dodman *et al.* 2004), based on sightings in 1997 at Tchétche in different seasons (R. Matías *in litt.* 2004).

Grey-rumped Swallow *Pseudhirundo griseopyga*
Common in savanna habitats, with flocks of 3–8 regularly seen over open grassland. Borrow & Demey (2001) map one record in Guinea-Bissau.

Turati's Boubou *Laniarius turatii*
Regularly seen in woodland and gallery forest, often in the understorey.

Black-winged Oriole *Oriolus nigripennis*
Two were seen near Pataque (11°53'N 13°57'W) on 6 February 2013, foraging at the edge of gallery forest and a cashew plantation. They were located by their melodious oriole-like *whute-luw* calls. One was an adult with a black head and upper breast, red bill and plain olive back. Black central tail feathers were noted and no white patch at the edge of the wing was present, excluding Western Black-headed Oriole *O. brachyrhynchus.* The other bird was an immature with a streaked throat and upper breast; bill and overall plumage were slightly duller than in the adult. Not listed in the ABC Guinea-Bissau checklist (Dowsett *et al.* 2013d), but reported on the Bijagós archipelago by Dodman *et al.* (2004) based on a record of two in December 1986 (Altenburg & van der Kamp 1992).

Dybowski's Twinspot *Euschistospiza dybowskii*
Several observations, including a male singing in gallery forest near Béli, a flock of seven in a cashew plantation near Pataque, and singles and pairs in cashew plantations, agricultural land and along streams. Has been recorded in neighbouring Senegal (apparently just three records: Fernández-García *et al.* 2013) and Guinea (Dowsett *et al.* 2013c, g). In Guinea-Bissau, known only from

the Boé (Dodman *et al.* 2004); it is not listed in the ABC Guinea-Bissau checklist (Dowsett *et al.* 2013d).

Threats and conservation

The Boé region harbours a significant and diverse fauna and flora and constitutes an exciting birding destination in West Africa. Aside from birds, the region is important for many mammals. During this survey, Western African Chimpanzee was observed in gallery forest and savanna woodland several kilometres north-east of Béli. Other primates such as Green Monkey *Chlorocebus aethiops sabaeus* and Red Monkey *Erythrocebus patas* were common in savanna habitat, whereas more elusive species, such as King Colobus *Colobus polykomos*, were observed in gallery forest remnants. Other mammals recently observed include Forest Buffalo *Syncerus caffer nanus* and Leopard *Panthera pardus* (J. Van Schijndel pers. comm.).

However, current human development and external pressures may constitute serious threats to conservation in the Boé region. The loss of natural forest cover is probably the most serious threat to its biodiversity. Over the last 17 years dense forest has declined by 50% (Cassamá 2009) due to illegal timber exploitation, conversion to agriculture and uncontrolled bushfires set by farmers, hunters and cattle herders. Although timber extraction is illegal, the occurrence of economically important trees, including *Afzelia africana* (Vulnerable), *Pterocarpus erinaceus* and *Prosopis africana*, encourages illegal exploitation (lorries loaded with timber observed leaving the area). No data exist concerning the impact of illegal forest clearance, but some species may have been reduced to alarmingly low densities (Cassamá 2009).

Traditional agricultural practices are primarily based on annual cutting and burning of forest to cultivate rice, the main crop of local communities. The impact of land clearance for agriculture is most evident around settlements but more remote areas are also affected. Immigration of slash-and-burn farmers and livestock herders from neighbouring Guinea, and the establishment of new *tabancas*, may also increase conflict between Man and nature. As observed elsewhere in Guinea-Bissau, the reduction of natural forest is also associated with conversion to cashew plantations. Although the area of such plantations in my study area is not large, around some *tabancas*, such as Pataque and Béli, these are sited near watercourses to the detriment of gallery forest.

Hunting is widespread. All of the hunters encountered were local villagers who target mainly birds, e.g. Double-spurred Francolin *Francolinus bicalcaratus* and Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*. In villages, Violet Turaco *Tauraco violacea* is targeted by children. Sport 'trophy' hunting (mainly of mammals) by tourists from Bissau, neighbouring countries and even Europe also occurs (Cassamá 2009). The region is frequently visited by poachers who illegally hunt and export bushmeat to Guinea (Béli villagers pers. comm.). Fire is used by hunters to make target species, especially mammals, move into open areas. During the field work *c.*140 ha of savanna woodland and grassland near Lugajole was recently burnt by hunters from Guinea (Lugajole villagers pers. comm.). As over most of Africa, unregulated hunting may lead to serious declines in larger mammals. For example, Forest Buffalo *Syncerus caffer nanus* is now confined to gallery forest along the Fefine River (J. Van Schijndel pers. comm.).

Bauxite mining is expected to become important economically, coupled with the development of infrastructure such as the ongoing construction of roads and a planned railway. The government has already granted concessions for two areas, totalling *c.*400 ha, for bauxite mining near the border with Guinea (Fig. 1).

Despite the study area's biodiversity, and the importance of its conservation, the area was not included within the proposed Boé National Park (see Cassamá 2009). Vendu Tcham Lake and its environs were included within the conservation plan as a faunal corridor but, strangely, most of the area to the south, proposed as an IBA by Dodman *et al.* (2004), was also omitted. This was probably due to a shortage of scientific data; the present work and future investigation may assist in redefining the limits of Vendu Tcham IBA (Dodman *et al.* 2004) and, hopefully, the final borders of Boé National Park. The latter may boost sustainable development of the Boé based on nature conservation and ecotourism. To achieve this, joint efforts by the government, international agencies and local NGOs are essential. Development of a conservation strategy for the Boé region should follow a community-based approach, by involving local populations in the planning, decision-making and management of natural resources (Neumann 1998). Special care should be given to avoid ineffective and authoritarian projects, as previously described elsewhere in Guinea-Bissau (Temudo 2012).

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Appendix 1. List of bird species recorded in January–February 2013 in the Boé region, south-east Guinea-Bissau. Additional species recorded by Piet Wit in 2007–13 (with approximate date of observation) are included. Sequence and taxonomy follow Dowsett *et al.* (2013d) with some amendments. Species marked * represent additions to the Guinea-Bissau list. Encounter rate = no. of individuals recorded per ten hours of census. IUCN threat status (BirdLife International 2013): EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, NT = Near Threatened. Biome-restricted species (Fishpool & Evans 2001): SGS = Sudan-Guinea Savanna, GCF = Guinean-Congo Forest. Species recorded by Rodwell (1996) in Tchétche and Medina Dongo, and also recorded during the present study, are indicated.

Lista das espécies de aves registadas em janeiro e fevereiro de 2013 no sector do Boé, sudeste da Guiné-Bissau. Incluem-se os registos efectuados na região por P. Wit durante 2007–13 (datas de observação aproximadas). Sequência e taxonomia de acordo com Dowsett *et al.* (2013d) com pequenas alterações. As espécies com * constituem novos registos para a Guiné-Bissau. Taxa de encontro = nº de indivíduos registado por dez horas de observação. Categorias de ameaça IUCN (BirdLife International 2013): EN = Em Perigo, VU = Vulnerável, NT = Quase Ameaçado. Espécies restritas a um bioma (Fishpool & Evans 2001): SGS = Savana Sudano-Guineense, GCF = Floresta Guineo-Congolesa. São ainda indicadas as espécies registadas por Rodwell (1996) em Tchétche e Medina Dongo que também foram observadas neste estudo.

English name	Scientific name	Encounter rate	Wit 2007–13	IUCN	Biome	Rodwell (1996)
Ardeidae						
Dwarf Bittern	*Ixobrychus sturmii*	-	Jul 11			
Squacco Heron	*Ardeola ralloides*	0.3				
Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*	0.9				
Green-backed Heron	*Butorides striata*	0.1				x
Intermediate Egret	*Egretta intermedia*	0.1				
Scopidae						
Hamerkop	*Scopus umbretta*	0.3				
Pandionidae						
Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*	-	May 09			
Accipitridae						
Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*	0.3				
African Fish Eagle	*Haliaeetus vocifer*	-	common			x
Palm-nut Vulture	*Gypohierax angolensis*	0.3				
Hooded Vulture	*Necrosyrtes monachus*	4.9		EN		x

English name	Scientific name	Encounter rate	Wit 2007–13	IUCN	Biome	Rodwell (1996)
White-backed Vulture	*Gyps africanus*	0.1		EN		
Rüppell's Vulture	*Gyps rueppellii*	0.1		EN		
Short-toed Snake Eagle	*Circaetus gallicus*	-	Sep 09			
Beaudouin's Snake Eagle	*Circaetus beaudouini*	0.4		VU		
Brown Snake Eagle	*Circaetus cinereus*	-	common			
Western Banded Snake Eagle	*Circaetus cinerescens*	-	Jul 11			
Bateleur	*Terathopius ecaudatus*	0.5		NT		
African Harrier Hawk	*Polyboroides typus*	1.9				x
Gabar Goshawk	*Micronisus gabar*	0.1				x
Dark Chanting Goshawk	*Melierax metabates*	0.3				
Shikra	*Accipiter badius*	1.0				
Red-thighed Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter erythropus*	0.1			GCF	
Black Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter melanoleucus*	0.5				
Lizard Buzzard	*Kaupifalco monogrammicus*	1.3				
African Hawk Eagle	*Aquila spilogaster*	-	Oct 13			
Falconidae						
Common Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	0.3				
Grey Kestrel	*Falco ardosiaceus*	0.4				
Lanner Falcon	*Falco biarmicus*	0.1				
Phasianidae						
Stone Partridge	*Ptilopachus petrosus*	-	Nov 11			
Double-spurred Francolin	*Francolinus bicalcaratus*	4.0				x
Numididae						
Helmeted Guineafowl	*Numida meleagris*	3.1				x
Rallidae						
Black Crake	*Amaurornis flavirostris*	0.3				
Heliornithidae						
African Finfoot	*Podica senegalensis*	-	Dec 08			
Otididae						
Black-bellied Bustard	*Eupodotis melanogaster*	0.5				
Jacanidae						
African Jacana	*Actophilornis africanus*	0.3				
Glareolidae						
Bronze-winged Courser	*Rhinoptilus chalcopterus*	0.1				
Charadriidae						
Forbes's Plover	*Charadrius forbesi*	-	Jan 09			
African Wattled Plover	*Vanellus senegallus*	1.4				x
Scolopacidae						
Green Sandpiper	*Tringa ochropus*	-	Nov 09			
Pteroclidae						
Four-banded Sandgrouse	*Pterocles quadricinctus*	0.1				
Columbidae						
African Green Pigeon	*Treron calva*	4.3				
Blue-spotted Wood Dove	*Turtur afer*	3.1				
Black-billed Wood Dove	*Turtur abyssinicus*	4.6				
Namaqua Dove	*Oena capensis*	0.4				
Red-eyed Dove	*Streptopelia semitorquata*	6.9				
Vinaceous Dove	*Streptopelia vinacea*	5.4				
Laughing Dove	*Streptopelia senegalensis*	2.3				
Psittacidae						
Senegal Parrot	*Poicephalus senegalus*	0.8			SGS	
Rose-ringed Parakeet	*Psittacula krameri*	-	Dec 09			
Musophagidae						
Green Turaco	*Tauraco persa*	1.5			GCF	x
Violet Turaco	*Tauraco violaceus*	3.8			SGS	
Western Grey Plantain-eater	*Crinifer piscator*	2.5				
Cuculidae						
Klaas's Cuckoo	*Chrysococcyx klaas*	0.3				x
Black-throated Coucal	*Centropus leucogaster*	0.3			GCF	

English name	Scientific name	Encounter rate	Wit 2007–13	IUCN	Biome	Rodwell (1996)
Black Coucal	*Centropus grillii*	-	Oct 07			
Senegal Coucal	*Centropus senegalensis*	2.0				x
Tytonidae						
Barn Owl	*Tyto alba*	0.1				
Strigidae						
African Scops Owl	*Otus senegalensis*	0.4				x
Spotted Eagle Owl	*Bubo africanus*	0.1				
Caprimulgidae						
Long-tailed Nightjar	*Caprimulgus climacurus*	0.1				
Standard-winged Nightjar	*Macrodipteryx longipennis*	0.1				
Apodidae						
African Palm Swift	*Cypsiurus parvus*	3.1				
Little Swift	*Apus affinis*	0.6				
Alcedinidae						
Blue-breasted Kingfisher	*Halcyon malimbica*	0.9				x
Striped Kingfisher	*Halcyon chelicuti*	0.8				
Shining-blue Kingfisher	*Alcedo quadribrachys*	0.3				x
Giant Kingfisher	*Megaceryle maxima*	0.1				x
Meropidae						
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	*Merops persicus*	0.4				
European Bee-eater	*Merops apiaster*	5.4				
Coraciidae						
Rufous-crowned Roller	*Coracias naevius*	-	Jan 09			
Blue-bellied Roller	*Coracias cyanogaster*	1.4			SGS	
Abyssinian Roller	*Coracias abyssinicus*	1.0				
Phoeniculidae						
Green Wood-hoopoe	*Phoeniculus purpureus*	0.6				
Black Scimitarbill	*Rhinopomastus aterrimus*	1.0				
Upupidae						
Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*	-	Jan 12			
Bucerotidae						
African Pied Hornbill	*Tockus fasciatus*	2.5			GCF	x
African Grey Hornbill	*Tockus nasutus*	6.1				x
Capitonidae						
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird	*Pogoniulus bilineatus*	1.3				
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird	*Pogoniulus chrysoconus*	0.9				
Bearded Barbet	*Lybius dubius*	0.1			SGS	
Indicatoridae						
Greater Honeyguide	*Indicator indicator*	0.1				
Picidae						
Fine-spotted Woodpecker	*Campethera punctuligera*	0.4				
Buff-spotted Woodpecker	*Campethera nivosa*	0.3			GCF	
Cardinal Woodpecker	*Dendropicos fuscescens*	0.5				
Grey Woodpecker	*Dendropicos goertae*	0.8				
Alaudidae						
Flappet Lark	*Mirafra rufocinnamomea*	0.6				
Sun Lark	*Galerida modesta*	3.6			SGS	
*Chestnut-backed Sparrow Lark	*Eremopterix leucotis*	0.3				
Hirundinidae						
Fanti Saw-wing	*Psalidoprocne obscura*	0.1			GCF	
*Lesser Striped Swallow	*Cecropis abyssinica*	0.6				
Red-brested Swallow	*Cecropis semirufa*	2.6				
Grey-rumped Swallow	*Pseudhirundo griseopyga*	0.6				
Pied-winged Swallow	*Hirundo leucosoma*	5.4			SGS	x
Red-chested Swallow	*Hirundo lucida*	0.5				
Motacillidae						
Tree Pipit	*Anthus trivialis*	1.9				
Yellow-throated Longclaw	*Macronyx croceus*	0.3				

English name	Scientific name	Encounter rate	Wit 2007–13	IUCN	Biome	Rodwell (1996)
Campephagidae						
Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike	*Campephaga phoenicea*	0.6				x
White-breasted Cuckooshrike	*Coracina pectoralis*	0.6				
Pycnonotidae						
Yellow-throated Leaflove	*Chlorocichla flavicollis*	3.6				
Leaflove	*Phyllastrephus scandens*	0.5				x
Common Bulbul	*Pycnonotus barbatus*	30				
Turdidae						
Snowy-crowned Robin Chat	*Cossypha niveicapilla*	0.3				x
White-crowned Robin Chat	*Cossypha albicapilla*	0.4			SGS	
Whinchat	*Saxicola rubetra*	0.4				
*Heuglin's Wheatear	*Oenanthe heuglini*	0.1				
White-fronted Black Chat	*Myrmecocichla albifrons*	0.5			SGS	
African Thrush	*Turdus pelios*	1.1				
Cisticolidae						
Singing Cisticola	*Cisticola cantans*	0.4				x
Rufous Cisticola	*Cisticola rufus*	0.3			SGS	
Tawny-flanked Prinia	*Prinia subflava*	4.6				x
Red-winged Warbler	*Heliolais erythropterus*	0.5				x
Yellow-breasted Apalis	*Apalis flavida*	0.4				
Grey-backed Camaroptera	*Camaroptera brachyura*	3.4				x
Sylviidae						
African Moustached Warbler	*Melocichla mentalis*	0.9				
Melodious Warbler	*Hippolais polyglotta*	1.1				
Senegal Eremomela	*Eremomela pusilla*	2.6			SGS	x
Willow Warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus*	0.4				
Oriole Warbler	*Hypergerus atriceps*	0.6			SGS	
Garden Warbler	*Sylvia borin*	0.1				
Yellow-bellied Hyliota	*Hyliota flavigaster*	0.1				x
Muscicapidae						
Northern Black Flycatcher	*Melaenornis edolioides*	3.5				x
Pale Flycatcher	*Melaenornis pallidus*	0.1				
Lead-coloured Flycatcher	*Myioparus plumbeus*	0.3				
Pied Flycatcher	*Ficedula hypoleuca*	1.8				
Monarchidae						
African Paradise Flycatcher	*Terpsiphone viridis*	0.3				x
Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher	*Terpsiphone rufiventer*	2.5			GCF	
Platysteiridae						
Common Wattle-eye	*Platysteira cyanea*	6.3				x
Senegal Batis	*Batis senegalensis*	1.1				x
Timaliidae						
Brown Illadopsis	*Illadopsis fulvescens*	0.1			GCF	
Brown Babbler	*Turdoides plebejus*	3.0				
Blackcap Babbler	*Turdoides reinwardtii*	2.3			SGS	
Paridae						
White-shouldered Black Tit	*Parus guineensis*	0.3				x
Salpornithidae						
Spotted Creeper	*Salpornis spilonotus*	0.3				
Nectariniidae						
Green-headed Sunbird	*Cyanomitra verticalis*	1.1				x
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	*Chalcomitra senegalensis*	1.1				x
Collared Sunbird	*Hedydipna collaris*	0.4				
Pygmy Sunbird	*Hedydipna platura*	0.4				x
Beautiful Sunbird	*Cinnyris pulchellus*	3.3				x
Variable Sunbird	*Cinnyris venustus*	3.8				x
Splendid Sunbird	*Cinnyris coccinigaster*	0.9			SGS	x
Zosteropidae						
Yellow White-eye	*Zosterops senegalensis*	5.8				

English name	Scientific name	Encounter rate	Wit 2007–13	IUCN	Biome	Rodwell (1996)
Laniidae						
Yellow-billed Shrike	*Corvinella corvina*	1.3			SGS	
Malaconotidae						
Grey-headed Bush-shrike	*Malaconotus blanchoti*	0.3				
Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike	*Malaconotus sulfureopectus*	1.3				x
Black-crowned Tchagra	*Tchagra senegalus*	1.8				x
Northern Puffback	*Dryoscopus gambensis*	2.8				x
Turati's Boubou	*Laniarius turatii*	1.4			GCF	
Yellow-crowned Gonolek	*Laniarius barbarus*	0.1				
Brubru	*Nilaus afer*	1.1				
Prionopidae						
White Helmetshrike	*Prionops plumatus*	3.4				
Oriolidae						
Black-winged Oriole	*Oriolus nigripennis*	0.3			GCF	
African Golden Oriole	*Oriolus auratus*	0.4				
Dicruridae						
Square-tailed Drongo	*Dicrurus ludwigii*	0.3				
Fork-tailed Drongo	*Dicrurus adsimilis*	2.8				
Corvidae						
Pied Crow	*Corvus albus*	0.3				
Piapiac	*Ptilostomus afer*	1.5			SGS	
Sturnidae						
Forest Chestnut-winged Starling	*Onychognathus fulgidus*	0.1			GCF	
Purple Glossy Starling	*Lamprotornis purpureus*	0.5			SGS	
Bronze-tailed Glossy Starling	*Lamprotornis chalcurus*	0.3			SGS	
Lesser Blue-eared Starling	*Lamprotornis chloropterus*	0.9				
Long-tailed Glossy Starling	*Lamprotornis caudatus*	2.0				
Violet-backed Starling	*Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*	-	Apr 11			
Passeridae						
Northern Grey-headed Sparrow	*Passer griseus*	0.5				
Bush Petronia	*Petronia dentata*	4.1			SGS	
Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-weaver	*Plocepasser superciliosus*	1.1			SGS	x
Ploceidae						
Little Weaver	*Ploceus luteolus*	0.3				
Black-necked Weaver	*Ploceus nigricollis*	1.0				
Village Weaver	*Ploceus cucullatus*	60.0				
Red-billed Quelea	*Quelea quelea*	4.0				
Black-winged Bishop	*Euplectes hordeaceus*	3.8				
Northern Red Bishop	*Euplectes franciscanus*	2.8				
Yellow-mantled Widowbird	*Euplectes macrourus*	0.3				x
Estrildidae						
Chestnut-breasted Negrofinch	*Nigrita bicolor*	0.4			GCF	x
Red-winged Pytilia	*Pytilia phoenicoptera*	1.1			SGS	
Dybowski's Twinspot	*Euschistospiza dybowskii*	1.6			SGS	
Red-billed Firefinch	*Lagonosticta senegala*	21.0				
Black-faced Firefinch	*Lagonosticta larvata*	-	Nov 09		SGS	
African Firefinch	*Lagonosticta rubricata*	-	Dec 10			x
Lavender Waxbill	*Estrilda caerulescens*	1.3			SGS	
Orange-cheeked Waxbill	*Estrilda melpoda*	3.4				x
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu	*Uraeginthus bengalus*	11.0				
Bronze Mannikin	*Lonchura cucullata*	3.1				
Viduidae						
Village Indigobird	*Vidua chalybeata*	1.0				
Pin-tailed Whydah	*Vidua macroura*	6.6				
Sahel Paradise Whydah	*Vidua orientalis*	0.3				
Exclamatory Paradise Whydah	*Vidua interjecta*	0.1			SGS	
Fringillidae						
Yellow-fronted Canary	*Serinus mozambicus*	2.9				x

Twenty-one additions to the avifauna of Benin

Bruno Portier[a] *and Wouter Plomp*[b]

Vingt-et-une additions à l'avifaune du Bénin. Le présent article documente la découverte de 13 espèces nouvelles pour le Bénin, principalement des oiseaux de mer et limicoles négligés par le passé (Océanite de Wilson *Oceanites oceanicus*, Fuligule nyroca *Aythya nyroca*, Oedicnème vermiculé *Burhinus vermiculatus*, Pluvier bronzé *Pluvialis dominica*, Vanneau terne *Vanellus lugubris*, Bécasseau maubèche *Calidris canutus*, Bécasseau roussâtre *C. subruficollis*, Labbe parasite *Stercorarius parasiticus*, Goéland railleur *Chroicocephalus genei*, Sterne voyageuse *Thalasseus bengalensis*, Guifette leucoptère *Chlidonias leucopterus*, Engoulevent du Natal *Caprimulgus natalensis* et Hirondelle à collier *Riparia cincta*), et de huit espèces dont la présence nécessitait confirmation (Sarcelle d'hiver *Anas crecca*, Messager sagittaire *Sagittarius serpentarius*, Poule sultane *Porphyrio porphyrio*, Jacana nain *Microparra capensis*, Bécasseau cocorli *Calidris ferruginea*, Coucou gris *Cuculus canorus*, Bergeronnette grise *Motacilla alba* et Anomalospize parasite *Anomalospiza imberbis*). Deux espèces introduites ou échappées de captivité sont rapportées : la première observation ouest-africaine du Corbeau familier *Corvus splendens* et la présence d'une petite population urbaine du Perroquet jaco *Psittacus erithacus* à Cotonou. L'ensemble de ces données porte à 566 le nombre d'espèces actuellement confirmées au Bénin.

Summary. We document 13 species that are new for Benin, mainly seabirds and shorebirds that were obviously overlooked in the past, as well as eight species whose presence required confirmation. The case of two escaped / introduced species is discussed: the first West African record of House Crow *Corvus splendens*, and the existence of a feral population of Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* in Cotonou. These additions bring the Benin list to a total of 566 species.

The first bird list for Benin (Dowsett 1993) numbered 423 species. Between 1993 and 2010, 58 additions to the country's avifauna, listed by Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (2011), were published by various authors, while the Dowsetts themselves added another 74 species, rejected 28 species whose presence on the Benin list they considered to be erroneous, and listed a further 28 that required confirmation, mostly because convincing details were lacking (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 2011).

The present paper reports 21 additional species: 13 newly discovered, eight that previously required confirmation and two introduced / escaped. Together with the recent discovery of Anambra Waxbill *Estrilda poliopareia* (Plomp *et al.* 2012), Long-legged Pipit *Anthus pallidiventris* (Thibault *et al.* 2012) and Little Rush Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala* (Merz *et al.* in prep.), the Benin list now stands at 566 species.

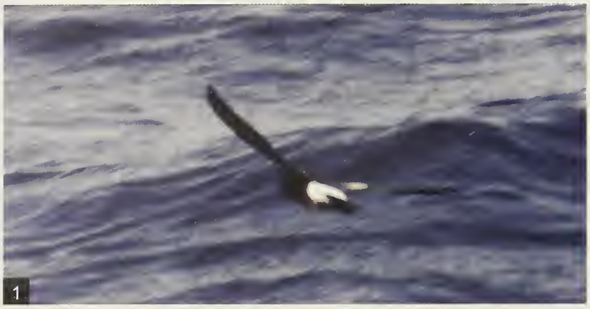
Initials of observers: Robert J. Dowsett (RJD), Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire (FDL), Alain Fossé (AF), Agnès Giannotti (AG), Julien Gonin (JG), Johannes Merz (JM), Sharon Merz (SM), Ewoud Plomp (EP), Wouter Plomp (WP), Bruno Portier (BP) and Peter Wiprächtiger (PW).

Additions to the avifauna of Benin

The following section lists 13 species for which there was no previously published record, eight of which are documented with photographs.

Wilson's Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*

On 16 September 2012, during a whale-watching trip organised by a local conservation NGO (Nature Tropicale, www.naturetropicale.org), at least three were photographed *c.*20 km offshore at 06°10'54"N 02°33'38"E (BP; Figs. 1–2). They were identified by their combination of relatively small size, white rump, contrasting pale band on the upperwing-coverts, toes extending well beyond the tail, and typical wing structure (short 'arm' and long 'hand') producing a more pointed wing than in the notionally similar European Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus.* Wilson's Storm-petrel breeds around Antarctica and is considered to be an uncommon to scarce non-breeding visitor to the Gulf of Guinea (Borrow & Demey 2001). It is probably regular in the region and had been overlooked due to the lack of pelagic observations in the country's waters.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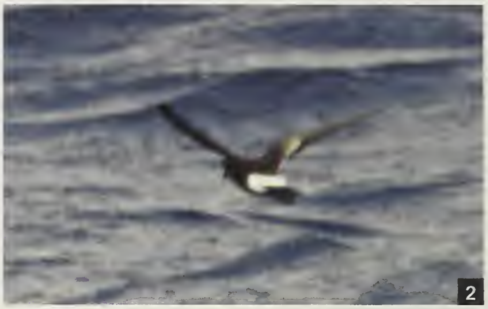
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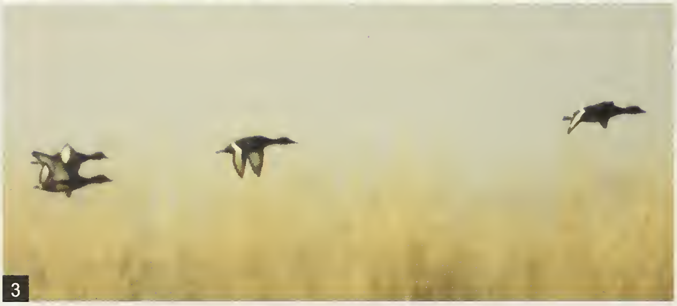
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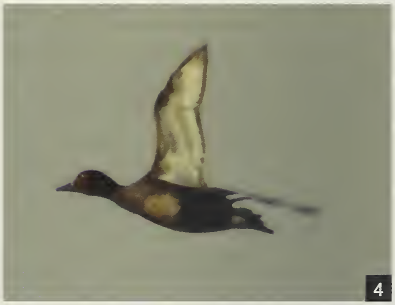
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Figures 1–2. Wilson's Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*, *c*.20 km off Cotonou, Benin, 16 September 2012 (Bruno Portier)

Océanite de Wilson *Oceanites oceanicus*, environ 20 km de Cotonou, Bénin, 16 septembre 2012 (Bruno Portier)

Figures 3–4. Ferruginous Ducks / Fuligules nyrocas *Aythya nyroca*, Île aux Oiseaux, Niger River, Benin, 1 March 2012 (Agnès Giannotti)

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*

Up to four were photographed on l'Île aux Oiseaux on the Niger River, in the extreme north of the country (*c*.12°05'N 03°12'E) on 26 February and 1 March 2012 (AG; Figs. 3–4) This Palearctic migrant is seldom observed south of the Niger River, but there are ten records in southern Niger, all in November–February (Source: NiBDaB; http://www.nibdab.org).

Water Thick-knee *Burhinus vermiculatus*

Two adults were observed in Cotonou harbour in May–June 2011 (Fig. 5); possibly the same birds were seen with an immature on 30 August 2011 (Fig. 7). Subsequently, groups of 4–10 birds were regularly observed in the same narrow, grassy, coastal belt dominated by *Remirea maritima*. All records to date are from the western harbour. However, with harbour enlargement works taking place since September 2011, suitable habitat is diminishing rapidly and the species has become more difficult to find since then. Since its plaintive call—slower, more drawn-out, melancholy and less descending than that of Senegal Thick-knee *B. senegalensis*—became familiar to us, we regularly heard the species at night in Cotonou, suggesting that it was overlooked in the past. Fairly similar to Senegal Thick-knee (both visually and aurally), identification at a distance can be difficult. At close range, adults exhibit an obvious double white-and-black line above the grey wing panel (Figs. 5–6), which is diagnostic (the white line is lacking in *B. senegalensis*). The wing panel is less marked on immatures (Fig. 7). Vermiculations are only apparent at very close range or in photographs. In flight, the species shows a limited amount of white on the primaries (pp1–3 only). Senegal Thick-knee occurs near Togbin / Houndodji lagoon, just *c*.10 km west of Cotonou. The two species therefore overlap in the south of the country, as also reported in coastal Ghana (R. Dowsett & F. Dowsett-Lemaire *in litt.* 2013), raising the possibility of potential interbreeding. Togo's coastal strip has been included within the range of Water Thick-knee but no records have been traced (Cheke & Walsh 1996).

Figures 5–6. Adult Water Thick-knees *Burhinus vermiculatus* in short coastal grassland dominated by *Remirea maritima*, Cotonou, Benin, 5 June 2011, and in flight, 26 October 2011 (Bruno Portier)

Oedicnèmes vermiculés *Burhinus vermiculatus* adultes dans les formations herbeuses côtières à *Remirea maritima*, Cotonou, Bénin, 5 juin 2011, et en vol, 26 October 2011 (Bruno Portier)

Figure 7. Immature Water Thick-knee / Oedicnème vermiculé *Burhinus vermiculatus*, Cotonou, Benin, 30 August 2011 (Bruno Portier)

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*
In the morning of 24 September 2010, following a night of heavy rain, BP observed an adult golden plover *Pluvialis* in almost full breeding plumage on the beach at Cotonou harbour (06°20'37"N 02°24'47"E), at the transition between salt-resistant vegetation and wet sand. Aware that European Golden Plover *P. apricaria* has not

been recorded so far south, BP considered it was probably an American *P. dominica* or Pacific Golden Plover *P. fulva*.

The smaller size, slimmer jizz, smaller head, thin bill and dark, golden-toned back immediately excluded Grey Plover *P. squatarola*, which frequently occurs in the area. Given its black underparts, extending from the face to lower belly, and its well-marked golden-yellow upperparts, the bird was obviously an adult in breeding plumage. Paler feathers among the black of the breast and belly indicated the onset of moult. The broad white supercilium contrasting with the very dark cap and the much darker back made the bird appear different from typical European Golden Plover. The black of the belly extended further onto the flanks, almost reaching the wings. Although white spots of already moulted feathers made the transition irregular, the white 'shawl' did not continuously descend from the forehead to lower flanks as it does in European Golden Plover. The black of the lower belly, behind the legs, was also spotted with white and the undertail-coverts were more white than black.

After *c.*10 minutes, the bird was disturbed by a fisherman and flew off, uttering a soft, distinctively trisyllabic and melodious whistle, the second syllable of which was slightly briefer and the last slightly higher pitched. Greyish underwings and axillaries (lacking pure white) with a narrow white stripe at the base of the primaries extending slightly onto the secondaries were clearly seen, definitely eliminating *P. apricaria*. Primary projection (number of primaries extending beyond the tertials) and leg length (tibia / tarsus ratio and whether or not the toes projected beyond the tail in flight) could not be appreciated.

Despite searching (with WP) *c.*2 km of beach and several ponds the same afternoon and next day, the bird was not relocated. From the description, the lack of plaintive notes recalling the vocalisations of *P. apricaria* or *P. fulva*, and the late moult (*P. fulva* commences plumage renewal as early as July), the bird was identified as an American Golden Plover. This rare Nearctic vagrant has been encountered in several West African countries, including Senegal (where the species has been almost annual in recent years), Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Nigeria and Ghana, where there were two in 2005, four together from November 2007 until January 2008 (Dowsett *et al.* 2008) and the species has been seen annually since (R. Dowsett & F. Dowsett-Lemaire *in litt.* 2013).

Senegal Lapwing (Lesser Black-winged Lapwing) *Vanellus lugubris*

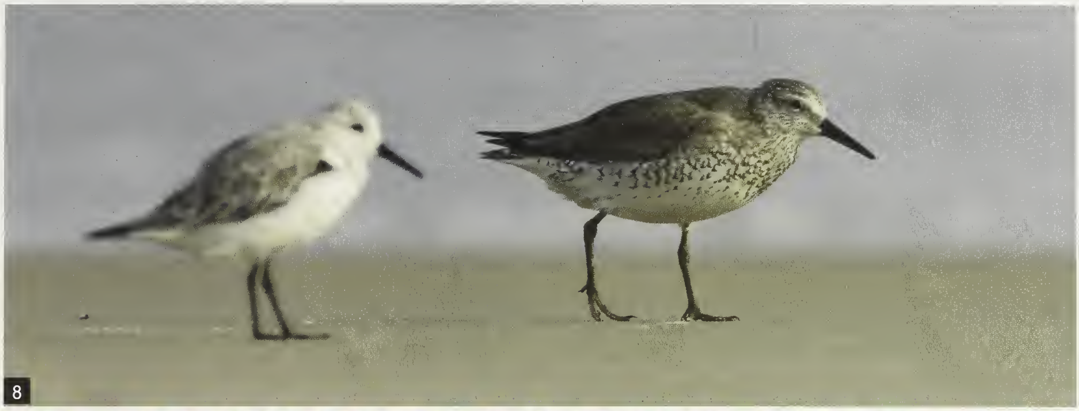
Two adults were observed at Sô-Ava an hour before dusk on 22 November 2010 (JG). They were easily identified by their dull brown back, dull grey head and white front and throat. The species is an uncommon resident of open country on the coastal plain in Togo (Cheke & Walsh 1996).

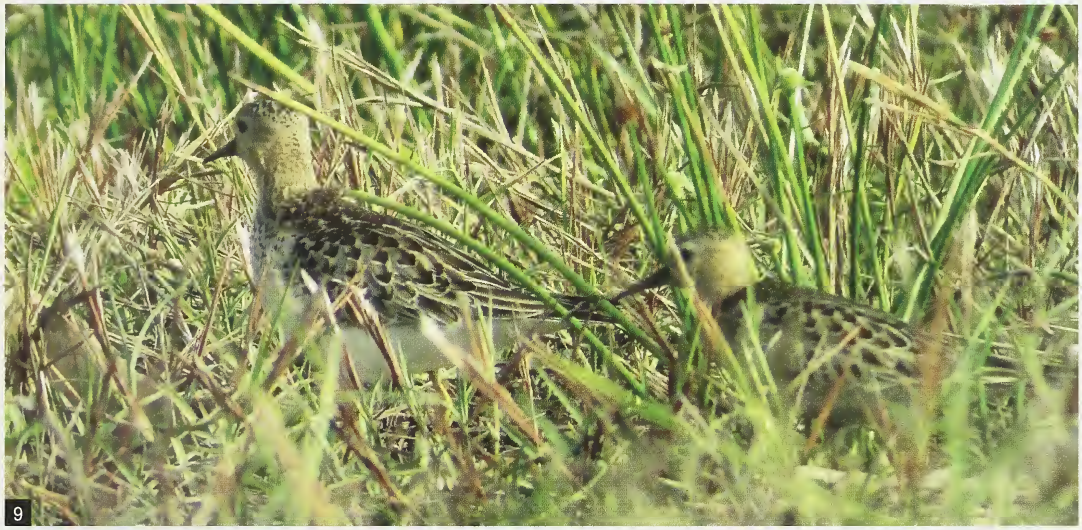
Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

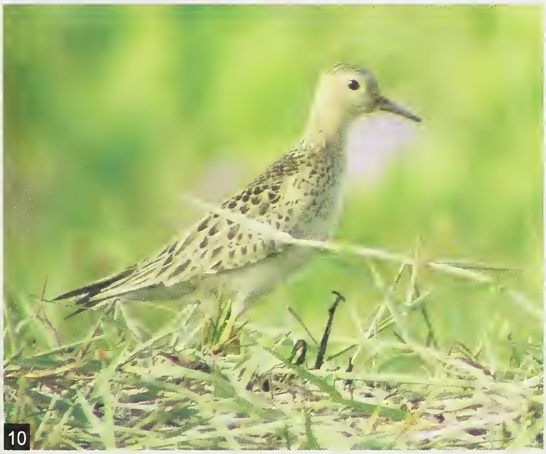
Two adults in non-breeding plumage were observed at Cotonou harbour on 30 November 2010 (BP). One moulting from first-winter plumage remained in the same area from 27 April until 5 May 2011 (BP & WP). Subsequently, an adult in non-breeding plumage was seen on 29 December 2011 and, probably the same individual, photographed on 2 February 2012 (Fig. 8; BP). Their relatively large size (compared to other sandpipers), greyish plumage, V-shaped markings on the flanks and streaked rump were diagnostic. This Palearctic migrant probably only occurs in small numbers on the coast during the boreal winter. In Togo, max. count is 16 at Lomé in February (Cheke & Walsh 1996).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Calidris* (*Tryngites*) *subruficollis*

Two, apparently an adult and an immature, were observed at Cotonou harbour on 16 October 2011 (WP). They were seen again and photographed next day (Figs. 9–10), with one remaining on 20th. Unlikely to be confused, except perhaps with immature Ruff *C.* (*Philomachus*) *pugnax*, the latter was eliminated by their smaller size, small round head, short thin bill and more uniform buff-coloured head and underparts. The dark eye and yellow legs were also noticeable. In flight, a diagnostic dark half-crescent was visible on the primary-coverts (Fig. 11). The birds were aged based on the dark mantle and scapulars being more obviously pale-fringed in the immature, producing a more scaly appearance to the upperparts.







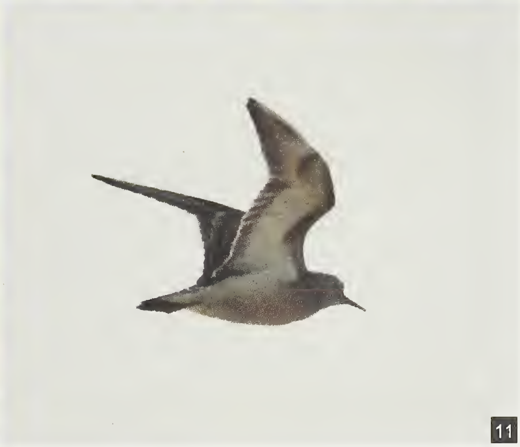


Figure 8. Adult winter Red Knot *Calidris canutus* with Sanderling *C. alba*, Cotonou, Benin, 2 February 2012 (Bruno Portier)

Bécasseau maubèche *Calidris canutus* avec Bécasseau sanderling *C. alba*, Cotonou, Bénin, 2 février 2012 (Bruno Portier)

Figures 9–11. Buff-breasted Sandpipers / Bécasseaux roussâtres *Calidris subruficollis*, Cotonou, Benin, 16–20 October 2011 (Bruno Portier)

The birds foraged in the short saltmarsh grasses dominated by *Remirea maritima* and *Ipomoea pes-caprae*, and avoided the mudflats. A massive influx of American vagrants occurred into Europe in autumn 2011, including a group of 23 Buff-breasted Sandpipers in Ireland on 25 September 2011, which was the largest-ever flock of this species in the Western Palearctic. The species was also recorded in several other West European countries, including Iceland, France, Denmark, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Spain (http://www.netfugl.dk). In West Africa, this Near Threatened species has been recorded as a vagrant to Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Gabon (Borrow & Demey 2004).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*
On 28 September 2009, a skua, either this species or Pomarine *S. pomarinus*, was seen *c.*1 km off Grand Popo (BP). On 6 October 2010, a pale-morph immature (probably a second calendar-year) Arctic Skua *S. parasiticus* was observed chasing Royal Terns *Thalasseus maximus* *c.*200–300 m offshore at the mouth of Nokoué Lake, Cotonou (06°21’27”N 02°26’42”E; BP). It was identified by virtue of its medium size and jizz, and the lack of barring on the rump, which excludes Long-tailed Skua *S. longicaudus*. The obvious white panel on the primaries (visible from above and below), the lack of a conspicuous dark breast-band, and the two short, pointed, central tail feathers projecting 2–3 cm beyond the other rectrices, excluded the more ‘chesty’ *S. pomarinus*. It was aged based on the paler-barred underwing-coverts and mottled belly and breast with a mix of cream and dark chocolate-brown feathers.

Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei*
An adult in non-breeding plumage was photographed among Royal Terns at Bouches du Roy on 12 November 2010 (JG; Fig. 12). The only confusion risk is with non-breeding Grey-headed Gull *C. cirrocephalus*, but the longer bill, gently sloping forehead and white outer primaries (visible in Fig. 12) eliminate this species. A record from the same location in November 2011 may refer to the same individual (PW). These appear be the easternmost records in the Gulf of Guinea.

Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis*
On the morning of 9 September 2010, two mid-sized orange-billed terns were present on the beach at Cotonou harbour among a mixed flock of *c.*145 terns, comprising Royal, Sandwich *T. sandvicensis*, Common *Sterna hirundo* and Damara Terns *Sternula balaenarum* (BP). They were immediately

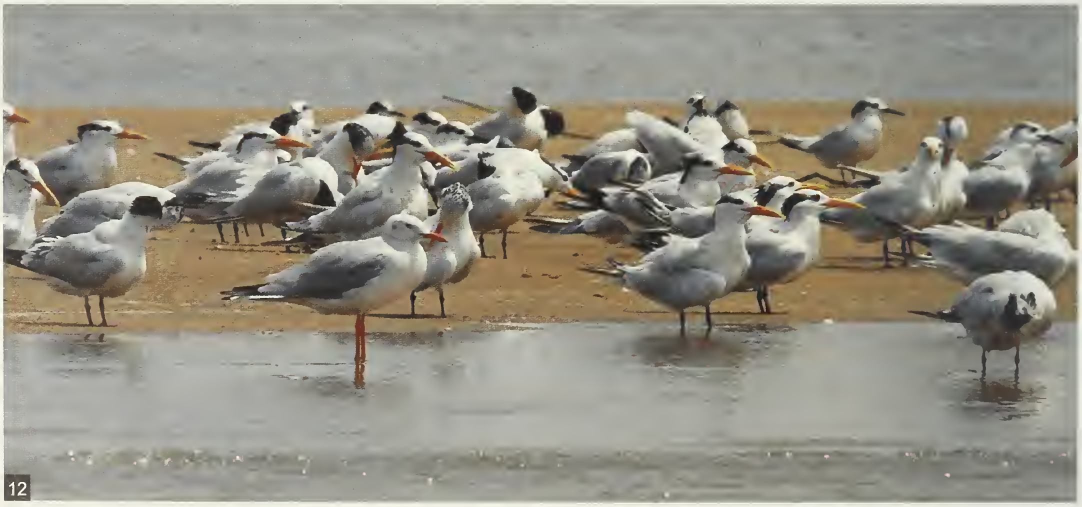


Figure 12. Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei* with Royal Terns *Thalasseus maximus*, Bouches du Roy, Benin, 12 November 2010 (Julien Gonin)

Goéland railleur *Chroicocephalus genei* avec Sternes royales *Thalasseus maximus*, Bouches du Roy, Bénin, 12 novembre 2010 (Julien Gonin)

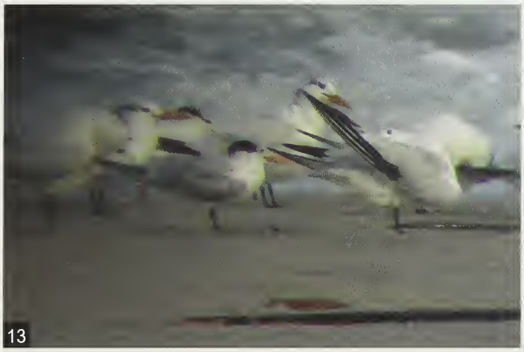


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Figure 13. Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis* among Royal Terns *T. maximus*, Cotonou, 9 September 2010 (Bruno Portier)

Sterne voyageuse *Thalasseus bengalensis* avec Sternes royales *T. maximus*, Cotonou, Bénin, 9 septembre 2010 (Bruno Portier)

identified as adult Lesser Crested Terns in non-breeding plumage (BP being familiar with the species from Senegal) and were approached to within 30 m before they flew off seawards. In the evening, one was again present and an acceptable photograph was obtained (Fig. 13).

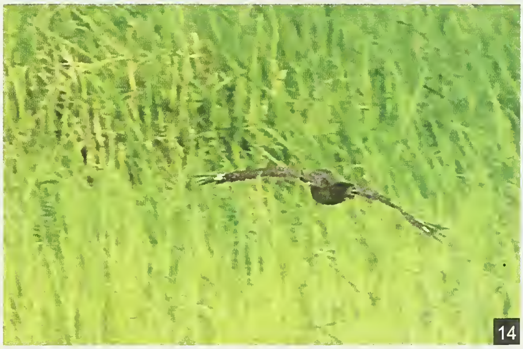
The following details, noted in the field, support the identification: size of Sandwich Tern (much smaller than Royal Tern in direct comparison), orange bill, white front / forehead, black cap behind the eye to nape, which was slightly crested, grey back / mantle and wing-coverts slightly darker than Royal Tern. In flight they had all-greyish upperparts (no white rump or tail) except a narrow white trailing edge to the secondaries and 3–4 darker (blackish) outer primaries. In flight, direct comparison with Royal Tern evidenced, aside of smaller size, the more conspicuous contrast between the upperparts and underparts (due to the slightly darker mantle and lack of white rump and tail). This is the easternmost record in the Gulf of Guinea.

White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

An adult in non-breeding plumage was observed moving west at sea with Royal Terns off Grand Popo (*c.*06°15'N 01°45'E) on 28 February 2010 (BP). It was separated from other *Chlidonias* by the very pale mantle with white rump and tail, and almost white upperwing except narrow dark grey line on the leading edge and black trailing edge to the 'arm' (dark shoulder and dark-tipped secondaries). Black on the hindcrown and behind the eye was noted. Black Tern *C. niger* is overall darker above, whilst Whiskered Tern *C. hybrida* lacks such a contrasting upperwing and a white rump. Listed by Dowsett (1993) from an old record at Arli / Pendjari; this was subsequently queried because it was unclear on which side of the Benin / Burkina Faso border the bird had been recorded (R.J. Dowsett *in litt.* 2014). Must be regarded as a vagrant in Benin.

Swamp Nightjar *Caprimulgus natalensis*

An adult female was flushed six times from wet *Paspalum vaginatum* grassland in the Plaine du Sô, Basse Vallée de l'Ouémé (06°29'34"N 02°23'31"E) on 19 June 2011 (Figs. 14–15; BP). Three Little Bitterns *Ixobrychus minutus payesii* in the immediate vicinity provide some evidence of the wetness of the habitat. No other nightjar is known to favour such wet or swampy grassland habitat, but the bird was positively identified based on the following diagnostic characters:



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Figures 14–15. Female Swamp Nightjar *Caprimulgus natalensis*, Sô-Ava, Benin, 19 June 2011 (Bruno Portier)

Engoulevent du Natal *Caprimulgus natalensis* femelle, Sô-Ava, Bénin, 19 juin 2011 (Bruno Portier) obvious buff spot on the primaries (pp2–4), black-tipped primaries (pp1–4), narrow buff trailing edge to the secondaries, buffish outermost rectrices, buff-spotted upper breast, barred breast and flanks, and uniform buff lower belly. The bird was sexed as a female based on the buffish-coloured wing spots and outer primaries (white in male). Its obvious territorial attachment (the bird never moved further than 20–30 m) could suggest local breeding.

Banded Martin *Neophedina cincta*
Two were with Common Sand Martins *Riparia riparia*, Ethiopian Swallows *Hirundo aethiopica* and Barn Swallows *H. rustica* at Sô-Ava, Plaine du Sô, Basse Vallée de l'Ouémé, on 21 March 2010 (WP). They were much larger than the other hirundines present and exhibited a well-defined, broad brown breast-band contrasting with the otherwise white underparts. The tail was square-ended (not forked). Their dashing flight (as the birds chased each other) was more reminiscent of a small falcon than swallows, and was very different from the more fluttering flight of Common Sand Martin.

Species whose presence in Benin required confirmation

The eight species below were listed by Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (2011) as requiring confirmation, mostly because published details were insufficient to be sure of their identification or on which side of the border they had been observed.

Common Teal *Anas crecca*
A male in breeding plumage was observed on the Mare Fogou, Pendjari National Park, on 14 March 2012 (WP & EP). The water level at this season was extremely low and the area had the aspect of a large marsh, with many herons, two Saddle-billed Storks *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*, Black Crowned Cranes *Balearica pavonina* and a bathing African Elephant *Loxodonta africana*. Other wildfowl included a few Knob-billed Ducks *Sarkidiornis melanotos*, White-faced Whistling Ducks *Dendrocygna viduata* and Spur-winged Geese *Plectropterus gambensis*. The teal did not associate with these larger ducks but swam apart, close to a Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* and a Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*. The bird was rather distant, but observed through the telescope its identification was straightforward: a small greyish duck with a reddish-brown head and dark green band from the eye to nape, yellowish undertail, and a horizontal white stripe on the scapulars.

Secretary-bird *Sagittarius serpentarius*
Infrequently encountered by W. Delvingt and J. Verschuren in Pendjari National Park in 1985–87 (Delvingt *et al.* 1989). B. Sinsin (pers. comm.) also reported an undated sighting from the same park in 1995–96.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*
An adult was seen feeding two large chicks on a suburban pond at Godomey, in the north-west suburbs of Cotonou (06°22'59"N 02°20'37"E) on 30 January 2011 (BP). At the same locality, an immature was observed on 20 February 2011 (BP) and at least three, including two juveniles, on 8 April 2012 (WP). Their size, long legs, heavy bill, blue plumage and green back of the adult eliminate confusion with the smaller Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrula alleni*. The feeding behaviour (extracting marrow from *Typha*) is also typical of the present species. In March–May 2012, the species was seen regularly: an adult was at Cotonou harbour on 16 March 2012 (Fig. 16), followed by a pair with two large chicks on 30 March 2012. Singles were seen occasionally in April–May on three *Typha*-bordered ponds in and around Cotonou (BP & WP). A belated record from April 2009 in a temporary pond (since filled in) between the Novotel and Marina Hotel in Cotonou, probably also refers to this species (WP).

Lesser Jacana *Microparra capensis*
One was photographed on l'Ile aux Oiseaux on the Niger River, in the extreme north of the country (*c.*12°05'N 03°12'E) on 1 March 2012 (AG; Fig. 17). A second record was made in the south of the country, where one was seen on a large pool covered with floating vegetation along the Zou River (07°12'36'N 02°17'24"E) on 28 June 2012 (BP). The prominent white supercilium, white underparts, small size and contrasting upperwing (paler coverts versus dark flight feathers) excluded confusion with juvenile African Jacana *Actophilornis africana*. Widely but

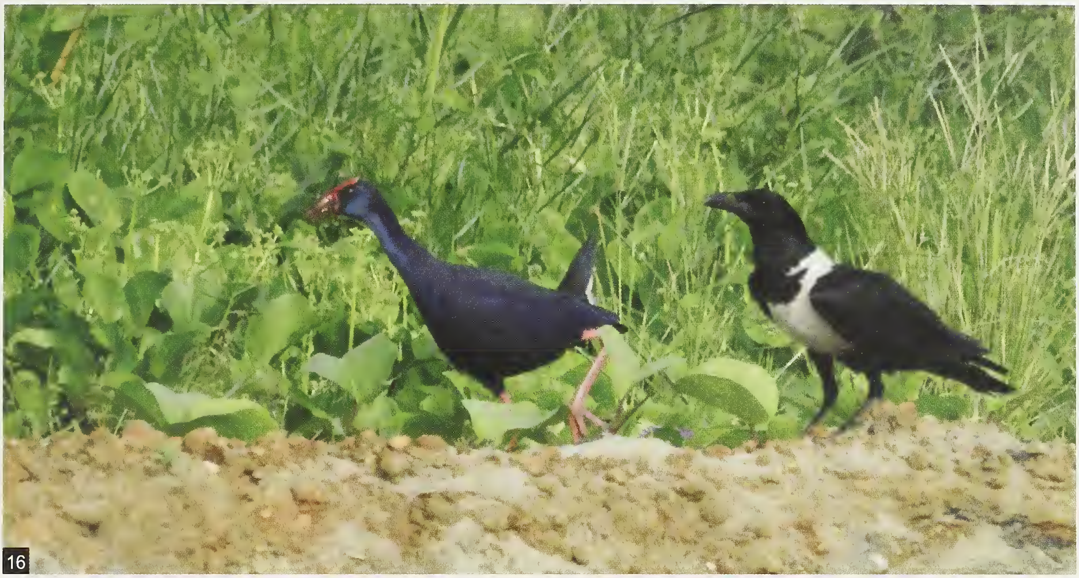
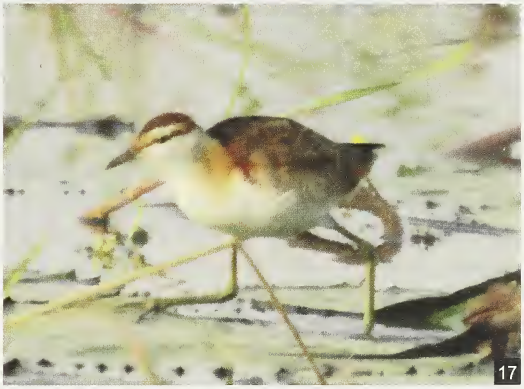


Figure 16. Adult Purple Swamphen / Poule sultane *Porphyrio porphyrio* with Pied Crow *Corvus albus*, Cotonou harbour, Benin, 16 March 2012 (Bruno Portier)

Poule sultane *Porphyrio porphyrio* adulte avec Corbeau pie *Corvus albus*, port de Cotonou, Bénin, 16 mars 2012 (Bruno Portier)

Figure 17. Lesser Jacana / Jacana nain *Microparra capensis*, Île aux Oiseaux, Niger River, Benin, 1 March 2012 (Agnès Giannotti)



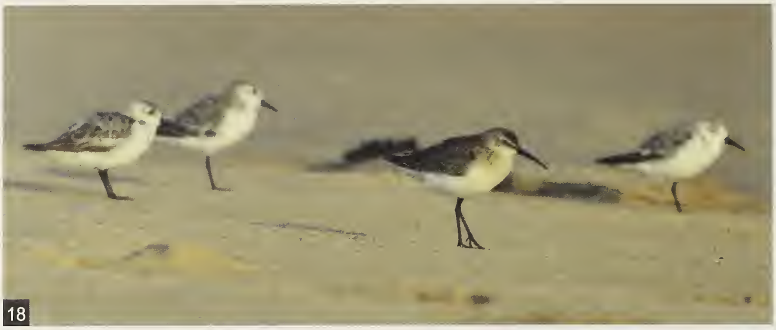
patchily distributed, the species has not been recorded in Togo, Ghana or southern Nigeria.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*
An immature was photographed at Cotonou harbour on 17 September 2011 (BP; Fig. 18), with three adults in non-breeding plumage in the same area on 17–21 October 2011 (WP & BP; Fig. 19). Subsequently, six were seen at Sô-Ava on 15 December 2012 (SM & JM), suggesting that the species is probably annual, albeit uncommon.

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*
Recently confirmed, with several records during spring migration: three, including a rufous female, near Agbon in wooded grassland near the dam (*c.*08°12'N 01°58'E) on 12 April 2011, one in Monts Kouffé on 13 April 2011 (*c.*08°32'N 01°58'E) and one on layon 12 in Lama Forest on 26 April 2011 (*c.*06°59'N 02°05'E) (all RJD & FDL). Appears heavier and stockier in flight than African Cuckoo *C. gularis*, with much less yellow at the base of the bill; female African Cuckoo lacks a rufous (hepatic) form (Payne 2005). The species is probably overlooked, due to the difficulty of distinguishing it from African Cuckoo.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*
On 6 and 10 November 2010, an adult in non-breeding plumage was seen by BP at a small pond in Cotonou harbour. The almost all-white head, black eye and bill, grey back becoming darker on the nape and hindcrown, black breast-band becoming narrower on the neck-sides, two narrow white wingbars (greater and median wing-coverts tipped white) and lack of white wing panel

18



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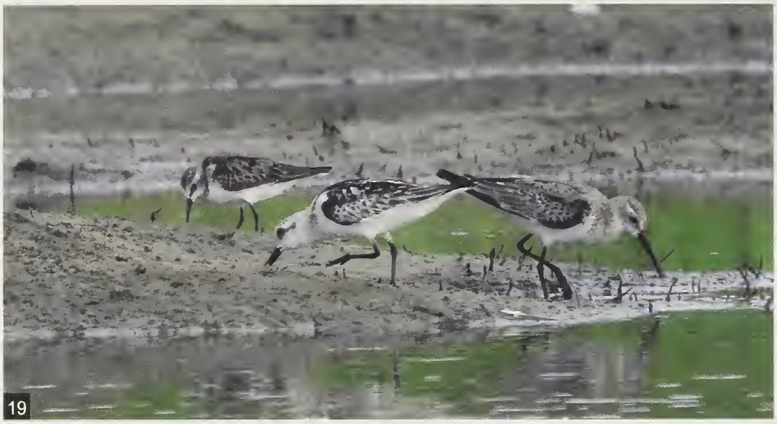

Figure 18. Immature Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*, with Sanderlings *C. alba*, Cotonou, Benin, 17 September 2011 (Bruno Portier)

Bécasseau cocorli *Calidris ferruginea* immature avec Bécasseau sanderling *C. alba*, Cotonou, Bénin, 17 septembre 2011 (Bruno Portier)

Figure 19. Adult winter Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* (on right) with Sanderling *C. alba* and Little Stint *C. minuta*, Cotonou, Benin, 18 October 2011 (Bruno Portier)

Bécasseau cocorli *Calidris ferruginea* adulte en plumage d'hiver avec Bécasseau sanderling *C. alba* et Bécasseau minute *C. minuta*, Cotonou, Bénin, 18 octobre 2011 (Bruno Portier)

exclude confusion with African Pied Wagtail *M. aguimp*, which is also present at the same site. A poor-quality photograph (seen by the editors) was obtained using a telescope, but is not suitable for publication. This may constitute the second country record following one at Bétérou in 1995 (Claffey 1995) and is the first for southern Benin, where the species is a vagrant. Considered a rare Palearctic migrant in Togo by Cheke & Walsh (1986) with two records, in January 1987 and September 1991.

Cuckoo Finch *Anomalospiza imberbis*
One in non-breeding plumage was seen in seasonally wet grassland with scattered clumps of trees on the Zou River floodplain of Domè (*c.*07°04'N 02°20'E) on 17 April 2011 (RJD). Subsequently, the species was found at Sô-Ava, Plaine du Sô, Basse Vallée de l'Ouémé, where singles in non-breeding plumage were observed on 1 December 2012 (SM & JM; Fig. 20) and 9 December 2012 (BP). Despite a previous record from southern Benin, on 1 July 2002 (Claffey 2003), the species was considered to require confirmation by Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (2011).

Introduced / escaped species

The following two species were recorded in the wild but they were obviously either introduced by Man or ship-assisted.

Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus*
Without suggesting a wild origin for the species in Benin (cagebirds are readily available on local markets), we report the presence of a significant feral population in Cotonou (06°21'N 02°26'E). Groups of 3–5 (once seven) are often seen and heard in tall trees and wooded gardens, sometimes forming noisy flocks with Senegal Parrot *Poicephalus senegalus*. In BP's garden, birds were observed feeding on *Terminalia catappa* nuts (Combretaceae). Birds are of the nominate subspecies and are especially vocal at sunrise in the early rains (April–June), remaining more silent during the rest of the year.

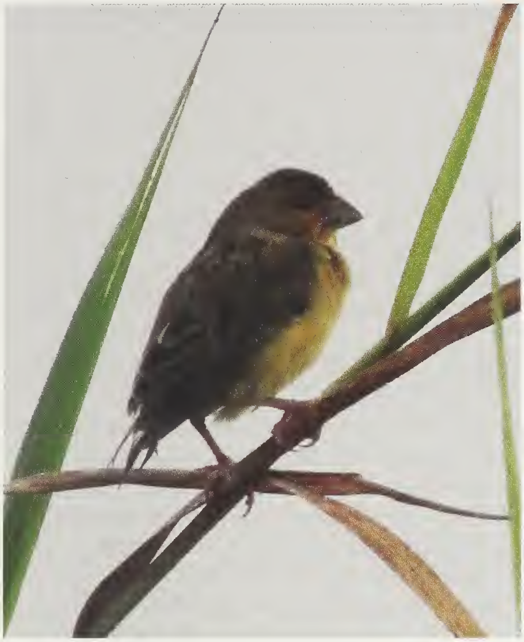

Figure 20. Cuckoo Finch / Anomalospize parasite *Anomalospiza imberbis*, Sô-Ava, Benin, 1 December 2012 (Sharon & Johannes Merz)

House Crow *Corvus splendens*
One, chased by a pair of Pied Crows *C. albus*, was observed in the gardens of the Presidency in Cotonou (06°21'01"N 02°24'30"E) on 6 February 2010. Just *c*.500 m from Cotonou harbour, the bird was doubtlessly ship-assisted. It was seen again on several occasions (12 May and 16 September 2010, 14, 19 and 20 March, 6 April and 27 December 2011) with a group of Pied Crows in the harbour area (BP). Noticeably smaller than Pied Crow and wholly glossy black, except the dark ash-grey nape, head-sides, upper back and breast (Fig. 21), with a proportionately large bill and steep forehead.

This appears to be the first record for West Africa and the only one on the Atlantic coast of Africa (Ryall 2010), except those recently reported in Namibia (see Recent Reports, this issue). The species originates from South Asia (Madge & Burn 1994) and has successfully invaded—by introduction or ship-assisted passage—tropical, subtropical and even temperate regions well beyond its native range. In Africa, it occurs from Egypt to South Africa as well as in Seychelles and on Mauritius. It has been recorded as a vagrant in Morocco (on the Mediterranean coast), Europe (Spain, France, Ireland and the Netherlands) and at several locations in the Americas and Australia (Ryall 2010).

Discussion

Despite a significant number of additions to the Benin list since 1993 and the last update being as recently as 2011, this paper, which adds a total of 21 species, demonstrates how incomplete our knowledge of the avifauna of Benin remains, as several species discovered recently appear to be common or nearly so. Ornithological research has received very little attention from the few native biologists, and few foreign ornithologists have published on the Benin avifauna in recent decades. We therefore applaud recent initiatives by some local NGOs aimed at developing ecotourism and bird tourism in the country. We hope it may inspire birdwatchers to visit Benin, where safe, easy, affordable and off-the-beaten tracks trips can be organised. Several taxa, including African Black Swift *Apus barbatus*, Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*, Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* and others, have been claimed but require confirmation. Readers are encouraged to visit the recently updated Benin

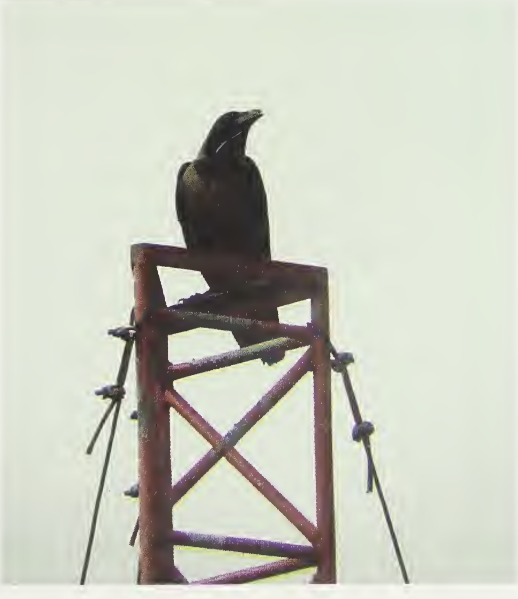

Figure 21. House Crow / Corbeau familier *Corvus splendens*, Cotonou, Benin, 6 April 2011 (Bruno Portier)

pages on the ABC website which provide a wide range of ornithological and logistical information (http://www.africanbirdclub.org/countries/Benin/introduction).

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Robert Dowsett and Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire were of great assistance in the preparation of this paper and provided invaluable identification tips in the field. Christophe Gruwier and Nicolas Selosse are thanked for their help with the identification of the American Golden Plover. John Caddick and Colin Ryall provided details on the spread of House Crow. Alain Fossé and Julien Gonin proffered information concerning their birding trips to Benin. Finally, we thank Joost Brouwer for stimulating discussions and for suggesting valuable improvements to an earlier version of this paper.

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The birds of Lake Kenyatta, Kenya: a preliminary survey

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Les oiseaux du lac Kenyatta, Kenya : un invertaire préliminaire. Les résultats sont présentés du premier inventaire ornithologique du lac Kenyatta, un lac d'eau douce dans Lamu County sur la côte nord du Kenya. Au total 138 espèces d'oiseaux appartenant à 50 familles ont été observées. Parmi celles-ci, cinq espèces sont d'intérêt mondial pour la conservation, quatre sont menacées au niveau régional, neuf sont inféodées au biome côtier d'Afrique de l'Est et 20% sont migratrices. Le lac et ses environs sont menacés par les conflits entre pêcheurs et hippopotames, les défrichements pour l'agriculture et les habitations, la coupe des arbres, la surpêche, les plantes aquatiques invasives et le surpâturage. Nous recommandons d'effectuer des études ornithologiques complémentaires et de promouvoir l'écotourisme et le renforcement des capacités des communautés afin qu'elles puissent gérer cette importante ressource de façon durable.

Summary. The results of the first ornithological survey of Lake Kenyatta, a freshwater lake in Lamu County on the northern Kenyan coast, are presented. A total of 138 bird species belonging to 50 families were recorded. Of these, five species are of global conservation concern, four are regionally threatened, nine are restricted to the East Africa coastal biome and 20% are migratory. The lake and its surroundings are currently threatened by hippopotamus–fishermen conflicts, encroachment for agriculture and settlement, tree cutting, overfishing, invasive aquatic weeds and overgrazing. We recommend further ornithological studies and promotion of ecotourism and capacity building for communities in order for them to manage this important resource sustainably.

Lake Kenyatta is a freshwater lake of *c.*5 km^2 located in the Mpeketoni Division of Lamu County, 230 km north of Malindi and 60 km from Lamu Island, on Kenya's north coast. It is adjacent to Kipini Conservancy. Historically, it was an oxbow lake of the Tana River (Mireri *et al.* 2008). It is the largest inland waterbody in the Tana River Delta and supposedly an important habitat for waterfowl, but it is eutrophic due to nutrients originating from the settlements above its northern shore (Njuguna 1992). Other than permanent marshes, there are seven other smaller lakes in the Tana River Delta. Until the early 1970s the area comprised pristine forest and was rich in wildlife (T. Kasoso pers. comm.). However, the Kenyan government decided to settle landless people from up-country in Mpeketoni Division and as a result the lake and its environs currently suffer from forest destruction in its upstream sub-catchment area to reduction in water levels in the lake (MO pers. obs.).

This study provisionally documents Lake Kenyatta's aquatic and terrestrial avifauna, which previously was hardly known, in order to provide baseline information for future research and conservation work. Based on the results of a 14-day survey, we assess bird species composition and provide a general description of the riparian forest and the threats that are likely to affect the lake and its environs.

Methods

The survey was conducted from 25 July to 8 August 2011. We chose this period because the dry season is particularly good to survey birds, including migratory species that mostly depart their tropical wintering grounds from August. We counted waterbirds and other aquatic-dependent birds at the lake and its vicinity only on the morning of 25 July in order to avoid double counting. Terrestrial bird species were sampled during 22 Timed Species Counts (TSC) with intervals of ten minutes, each count lasting 40 minutes (Bennun & Waiyaki 1993, Ogoma *et al.* 2010). Species were identified by sight or sound, each receiving a score of 4 to 1 depending on the first time it was recorded. We calculated TSC indices following Bibby *et al.* (1992) as follows: species recorded by TSCs in the first ten minutes received a score (TSC index) of 4; those recorded in the next ten minutes received a score of 3 and so on. We concentrated our TSCs at *c.*100 m width from the lake on the riparian vegetation and adjacent agricultural and grazing areas. Records of new species in successive TSCs throughout the study period were used to draw a species accumulation curve for terrestrial birds. Additional species were recorded opportunistically. We identified dominant vegetation types and some threats.

Results and Discussion

Species accumulation curve

At 110 terrestrial bird species recorded in the 22 TSCs our species accumulation curve did not yet attain a plateau (Fig. 1). This may be due to the single standard method (TSC) used and to the short survey period. It might also have been affected by season (dry) since we perhaps missed species that would be abundant in the wet season. Although we also made opportunistic observations, these were not used to draw the species accumulation curve. For future studies we suggest the use of at least two standardised survey methods to record more species.

Bird species composition

We recorded 138 bird species belonging to 50 families (Appendix 1), of which five are of global conservation concern (BirdLife International 2012). Two are classified as Endangered: Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* (three individuals recorded) and Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus* (two, encountered only once); one as Vulnerable: Madagascar Pratincole *Glareola ocularis*, a migrant from the Malagasy region (15 on 25 July); and two as Near Threatened: Fischer's Turaco *Tauraco fischeri*, an East Africa Coast biome species (singles on six different days) and Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* (two). Four species are classified as regionally Vulnerable in East Africa (Bennun & Njoroge 1996): African Darter *Anhinga rufa* (eight individuals), Great Egret *Egretta alba* (ten), Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis* (six) and Little Yellow Flycatcher *Erythrocercus holochlorus* (five), the latter also an East African Coast biome species. Nine (or 30%) of the 30 species belonging to the East African Coast biome known to occur in Kenya were recorded in the lake's riparian vegetation (Appendix 1). A total of 29 Palearctic, Afrotropical and Malagasy migrants were also noted (Appendix 1). The total number of species recorded during the survey was relatively considerable given that the survey lasted just 14 days and waterbirds were counted only once, a fact that reveals the quality of Lake Kenyatta and adjacent habitats for bird conservation. Table 1 shows the ten most abundant waterbirds; Table 2 presents bird species abundance established by TSC for the 20 most common terrestrial species.

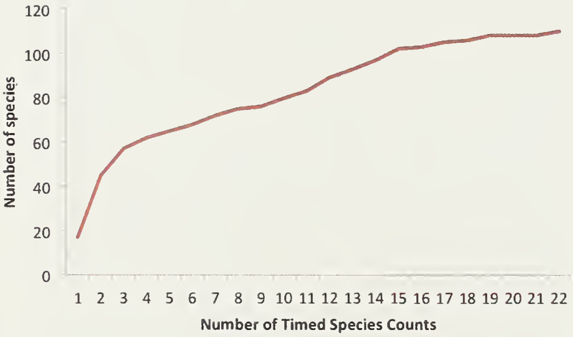

Figure 1. Species accumulation curve for the terrestrial birds of Lake Kenyatta, Kenya, based on the Timed Species Counts.

Courbe cumulative des espèces d'oiseaux terrestres observées au lac Kenyatta, Kenya, basée sur les comptages par points.

Table 1. Ten most abundant waterbirds species recorded at Lake Kenyatta, Kenya, on 25 July 2011.

Tableau 1. Les dix oiseaux d'eau les plus abondants observés au lac Kenyatta, Kenya, 25 juillet 2011.

Species		**No. of individuals**
Spur-winged Goose	*Plectropterus gambensis*	382
Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*	140
Sacred Ibis	*Threskiornis aethiopicus*	129
African Open-billed Stork	*Anastomus lamelligerus*	126
White-faced Whistling Duck	*Dendrocygna viduata*	101
Egyptian Goose	*Alopochen aegyptiaca*	73
Hadada Ibis	*Bostrychia hagedash*	55
African Spoonbill	*Platalea alba*	47
Reed Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax africanus*	38
Spur-winged Plover	*Vanellus spinosus*	35

Vegetation survey and current threats

Lake Kenyatta is characterised by a variety of vegetation types including indigenous trees and shrubs. The trees and shrubs are used by the local community for various purposes e.g. *Azadirachta indica* for medicinal purposes, *Kigelia africana* for producing traditional liquor (known as 'muratina' by the Kikuyu in central Kenya), etc. Indigenous hardwood trees such

Table 2. Twenty commonest terrestrial bird species recorded at Lake Kenyatta, Kenya, 25 July–8 August 2011.

Tableau 2. Les vingt oiseaux terrestres les plus communs observés au lac Kenyatta, Kenya, 25 juillet–8 août 2011.

Species		TSC Index	TSC Rank
Zanzibar Sombre Greenbul	*Andropadus importunus*	3.23	1
Red-eyed Dove	*Streptopelia semitorquata*	2.50	2
African Palm Swift	*Cypsiurus parvus*	2.23	3
Emerald-spotted Wood Dove	*Turtur chalcospilos*	2.23	4
Collared Sunbird	*Hedydipna collaris*	2.18	5
Grey-headed Kingfisher	*Halcyon leucocephala*	2.18	6
Golden Palm Weaver	*Ploceus bojeri*	2.00	7
Tawny-flanked Prinia	*Prinia subflava*	1.95	8
Common Bulbul	*Pycnonotus barbatus*	1.86	9
Northern Carmine Bee-eater	*Merops nubicus*	1.86	10
Fork-tailed Drongo	*Dicrurus adsimilis*	1.77	11
Red-capped Robin Chat	*Cossypha natalensis*	1.68	12
Speckled Mousebird	*Colius striatus*	1.68	13
White-browed Coucal	*Centropus superciliosus*	1.68	14
Yellow-fronted Canary	*Crithagra mozambica*	1.64	15
Black-backed Puffback	*Dryoscopus cubla*	1.59	16
Grey-backed Camaroptera	*Camaroptera brachyura*	1.59	17
Black-crowned Tchagra	*Tchagra senegalus*	1.55	18
African Paradise Flycatcher	*Terpsiphone viridis*	1.41	19
African Pied Wagtail	*Motacilla aguimp*	1.36	20

as *Strychnos madagascarensis*, *Afzelia quanzensis*, *Garcinia livingstonei and Ficus bussei* also occur. Aquatic weeds have invaded the lake, especially Nile Cabbage *Pistia stratiotes* and water-lilies *Nymphaea* spp. The cabbage seasonally covers many parts of the lake hampering the activities of fishermen. This may be a sign of the reduced depth of the lake, perhaps as a result of siltation, and might be attributed to the massive loss of vegetation in the upstream sub-catchment of the lake that contributes to the loss of top soil into the lake. According to local fishermen that we interviewed, some sections of the lake have recently become shallower and can be traversed on foot during the dry season. Nutrients from the nearby agricultural farms could also be washed into the lake by rainfall, providing nutrients for the growth of aquatic weeds. As they provide breeding and resting grounds for fish, aquatic weeds may contribute to fish production, which in turn may lead to increases in the number of fish-eating waterbirds. Human encroachment for settlement and farming, and overgrazing were common. Fresh tree stumps indicated ongoing cutting of the riparian vegetation.

Conclusion

Lake Kenyatta and its related habitats are rich in birds, although diversity is presumably greater than the current study indicates, especially if surveys were conducted during the migration season. This study was conducted from the end of July, when we suspect that most of the migratory waterbird species would have already started leaving their wintering grounds in Kenya. However, over 20% of the species recorded during the survey were migrants, indicating that the lake's ecosystem offers important feeding and roosting grounds for these species. For piscivores the lake provides much food (e.g. fish and crustaceans). Despite the importance of Lake Kenyatta for both waterfowl and terrestrial birds, little has been done to raise the profile of the area for conservation-related activities. We recommend more thorough avifaunal surveys including mist-netting, point counts and transects in riparian vegetation. Also, an annual waterfowl census should be conducted while simultaneously engaging local communities in this work.

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Appendix 1. Bird species recorded at Lake Kenyatta, Kenya, 25 July–8 August 2011.

Order and taxonomy follow OS-c, EANHS (2009). Status: R = Resident, AM = Afrotropical migrant, PM = Palearctic migrant, MM = Malagasy migrant.
IUCN threat status (BirdLife International 2012): EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, NT = Near Threatened. (*) = regionally Vulnerable species in East Africa (Bennun & Njoroge 1996). # = East Africa Coast biome species.

Annexe 1. Espèces d'oiseaux observées au lac Kenyatta, Kenya, 25 juillet–8 août 2011.

L'ordre et la taxonomie suivent OS-c, EANHS (2009). Statut : R = Résident, AM = Migrateur intra-africain, PM = Migrateur paléarctique, MM = Migrateur de la région malgache.
Status de conservation UICN (BirdLife International 2012) : EN = Menacé d'extinction, VU = Vulnérable, NT = Quasi menacé. (*) = espèce Vulnérable au niveau régional en Afrique de l'Est (Bennun & Njoroge 1996). # = espèce inféodée au biome côtier d'Afrique de l'Est.

		Status	IUCN
PHASIANIDAE			
Crested Francolin	*Francolinus sephaena*	R	
ANATIDAE			
Fulvous Whistling Duck	*Dendrocygna bicolor*	AM	
White-faced Whistling Duck	*Dendrocygna viduata*	R	
Spur-winged Goose	*Plectropterus gambensis*	R	
Egyptian Goose	*Alopochen aegyptiaca*	R	
Knob-billed Duck	*Sarkidiornis melanotos*	AM	
PODICIPEDIDAE			
Little Grebe	*Tachybaptus ruficollis*	R	
CICONIIDAE			
Saddle-billed Stork	*Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*	R	(*)
Woolly-necked Stork	*Ciconia episcopus*	R	
Marabou Stork	*Leptoptilos crumenifer*	R	
Yellow-billed Stork	*Mycteria ibis*	AM	
African Open-billed Stork	*Anastomus lamelligerus*	AM	
THRESKIORNITHIDAE			
African Spoonbill	*Platalea alba*	R	
Hadada Ibis	*Bostrychia hagedash*	R	
Sacred Ibis	*Threskiornis aethiopicus*	R	
Glossy Ibis	*Plegadis falcinellus*	AM/PM	
ARDEIDAE			
Black-headed Heron	*Ardea melanocephala*	R	
Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*	AM/PM	
Purple Heron	*Ardea purpurea*	PM	
Goliath Heron	*Ardea goliath*	R	
Great Egret	*Egretta alba*	R	(*)
Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	R	
Yellow-billed Egret	*Egretta intermedia*	R	
Striated Heron	*Butorides striata*	R	
Squacco Heron	*Ardeola ralloides*	AM/PM	
Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*	AM	
SCOPIDAE			
Hamerkop	*Scopus umbretta*	R	
PELECANIDAE			
Pink-backed Pelican	*Pelecanus rufescens*	R	
PHALACROCORACIDAE			
Reed Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax africanus*	R	
Great Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*	R	
ANHINGIDAE			
African Darter	*Anhinga rufa*	R	(*)
RECURVIROSTRIDAE			
Black-winged Stilt	*Himantopus himantopus*	AM/PM	
CHARADRIIDAE			
Long-toed Plover	*Vanellus crassirostris*	R	
Spur-winged Plover	*Vanellus spinosus*	R	
Three-banded Plover	*Charadrius tricollaris*	R	
JACANIDAE			
African Jacana	*Actophilornis africanus*	R	
SCOLOPACIDAE			
Common Sandpiper	*Actitis hypoleucos*	PM	
Wood Sandpiper	*Tringa glareola*	PM	
Common Greenshank	*Tringa nebularia*	R	
GLAREOLIDAE			
Madagascar Pratincole	*Glareola ocularis*	MM	VU

		Status	IUCN
LARIDAE			
White-winged Tern	*Chlidonias leucopterus*	PM	
Common Tern	*Sterna hirundo*	PM	
Swift Tern	*Sterna bergii*	AM/MM	
Sandwich Tern	*Sterna sandvicensis*	PM	
Caspian Tern	*Hydroprogne caspia*	PM	
ALCEDINIDAE			
Grey-headed Kingfisher	*Halcyon leucocephala*	AM	
Malachite Kingfisher	*Alcedo cristata*	R	
Pied Kingfisher	*Ceryle rudis*	R	
FALCONIDAE			
Red-necked Falcon	*Falco chiquera*	R	
ACCIPITRIDAE			
African Fish Eagle	*Haliaeetus vocifer*	R	
Egyptian Vulture	*Neophron percnopterus*	R	EN
Hooded Vulture	*Necrosyrtes monachus*	R	EN
Brown Snake Eagle	*Circaetus cinereus*	R	
Bateleur	*Terathopius ecaudatus*	R	NT
African Harrier Hawk	*Polyboroides typus*	R	
African Goshawk	*Accipiter tachiro*	R	
Little Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter minullus*	R	
Great Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter melanoleucus*	R	
Lizard Buzzard	*Kaupifalco monogrammicus*	R	
Tawny Eagle	*Aquila rapax*	R	
Wahlberg's Eagle	*Aquila wahlbergi*	R	
COLUMBIDAE			
Red-eyed Dove	*Streptopelia semitorquata*	AM	
Ring-necked Dove	*Streptopelia capicola*	R	
Emerald-spotted Wood Dove	*Turtur chalcospilos*	R	
Tambourine Dove	*Turtur tympanistria*	R	
Namaqua Dove	*Oena capensis*	R	
African Green Pigeon	*Treron calvus*	R	
MUSOPHAGIDAE			
Fischer's Turaco #	*Tauraco fischeri*	R	NT
CUCULIDAE			
Yellowbill	*Ceuthmochares aereus*	R	
White-browed Coucal	*Centropus superciliosus*	AM	
CAPRIMULGIDAE			
Slender-tailed Nightjar	*Caprimulgus clarus*	R	
APODIDAE			
African Palm Swift	*Cypsiurus parvus*	R	
Little Swift	*Apus affinis*	R	
COLIIDAE			
Speckled Mousebird	*Colius striatus*	R	
CORACIIDAE			
Lilac-breasted Roller	*Coracias caudatus*	R	
Broad-billed Roller	*Eurystomus glaucurus*	AM	
MEROPIDAE			
Northern Carmine Bee-eater	*Merops nubicus*	AM	

		Status	IUCN
PHOENICULIDAE			
Green Wood-hoopoe	*Phoeniculus purpureus*	AM	
Common Scimitarbill	*Rhinopomastus cyanomelas*	R	
BUCEROTIDAE			
Crowned Hornbill	*Tockus alboterminatus*	R	
African Grey Hornbill	*Tockus nasutus*	R	
Trumpeter Hornbill	*Bycanistes bucinator*	R	
CAPITONIDAE			
Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird	*Pogoniulus bilineatus*	R	
Red-fronted Tinkerbird	*Pogoniulus pusillus*	R	
Brown-breasted Barbet #	*Lybius melanopterus*	R	
INDICATORIDAE			
Lesser Honeyguide	*Indicator minor*	R	
PICIDAE			
Nubian Woodpecker	*Campethera nubica*	R	
Mombasa Woodpecker #	*Campethera mombassica*	R	
Cardinal Woodpecker	*Dendropicos fuscescens*	R	
MALACONOTIDAE			
Retz's Helmetshrike	*Prionops retzii*	R	
Grey-headed Bushshrike	*Malaconotus blanchoti*	R	
Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike	*Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus*	R	
Black-crowned Tchagra	*Tchagra senegalus*	R	
Black-backed Puffback	*Dryoscopus cubla*	R	
Slate-coloured Boubou	*Laniarius funebris*	R	
Tropical Boubou	*Laniarius aethiopicus*	R	
LANIIDAE			
Long-tailed Fiscal	*Lanius cabanisi*	R	
ORIOLIDAE			
African Golden Oriole	*Oriolus auratus*	R	
Black-headed Oriole	*Oriolus larvatus*	R	
DICRURIDAE			
Fork-tailed Drongo	*Dicrurus adsimilis*	R	
MONARCHIDAE			
Little Yellow Flycatcher #	*Erythrocercus holochlorus*	R	(*)
African Paradise Flycatcher	*Terpsiphone viridis*	R	
HIRUNDINIDAE			
Common Sand Martin	*Riparia riparia*	AM	
Ethiopian Swallow	*Hirundo aethiopica*	PM	
ALAUDIDAE			
Flappet Lark	*Mirafra rufocinnamomea*	R	
CISTICOLIDAE			
Coastal Cisticola	*Cisticola haematocephalus*	R	
Tawny-flanked Prinia	*Prinia subflava*	R	
Grey-backed Camaroptera	*Camaroptera brachyura*	R	
PYCNONOTIDAE			
Zanzibar Sombre Greenbul	*Andropadus importunus*	R	
Common Bulbul	*Pycnonotus barbatus*	R	
Yellow-bellied Greenbul	*Chlorocichla flaviventris*	R	
Northern Brownbul #	*Phyllastrephus strepitans*	R	

		Status	IUCN
Eastern Nicator	*Nicator gularis*	R	
TIMALIIDAE			
Scaly Babbler #	*Turdoides squamulata*	R	
STURNIDAE			
Rüppell's Starling	*Lamprotornis purpuroptera*	R	
Black-bellied Starling #	*Lamprotornis corruscus*	R	
Violet-backed Starling	*Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*	R	
TURDIDAE			
African Bare-eyed Thrush	*Turdus tephronotus*	AM	
Bearded Scrub Robin	*Cercotrichas quadrivirgata*	R	
Red-capped Robin Chat	*Cossypha natalensis*	R	
MUSCICAPIDAE			
Pale Flycatcher	*Bradornis pallidus*	AM	
NECTARINIIDAE			
Collared Sunbird	*Hedydipna collaris*	R	
Olive Sunbird	*Cyanomitra olivacea*	R	
Mouse-coloured Sunbird #	*Cyanomitra veroxii*	R	
Amethyst Sunbird	*Chalcomitra amethystina*	R	
PASSERIDAE			
Grey-headed Sparrow	*Passer griseus*	R	
PLOCEIDAE			
Grosbeak Weaver	*Amblyospiza albifrons*	R	
Village Weaver	*Ploceus cucullatus*	R	
Golden Palm Weaver	*Ploceus bojeri*	R	
Dark-backed Weaver	*Ploceus bicolor*	R	
Red-billed Quelea	*Quelea quelea*	AM	
Zanzibar Red Bishop #	*Euplectes nigroventris*	R	
ESTRILDIDAE			
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu	*Uraeginthus bengalus*	R	
Red-billed Firefinch	*Lagonosticta senegala*	R	
Bronze Mannikin	*Spermestes cucullatus*	R	
MOTACILLIDAE			
African Pied Wagtail	*Motacilla aguimp*	R	
Yellow-throated Longclaw	*Macronyx croceus*	R	
FRINGILLIDAE			
Yellow-fronted Canary	*Crithagra mozambica*	R	

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* breeding attempts on the Hauts Plateaux and in the Algerian Sahara, in 2011–13

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Tentatives de reproduction du Flamant rose *Phoenicopterus roseus* sur les Hauts Plateaux et au Sahara algérien en 2011–13. En 2011, le Flamant rose *Phoenicopterus roseus* s'est reproduit avec succès dans deux sites algériens. A Safioune, au Sahara, la reproduction a commencé au début du mois de janvier et a concerné 1.500 couples. C'est la première fois que l'espèce se reproduit sur ce site, avec l'envol de 600 poussins, malgré une intrusion par des chacals qui provoqua l'interruption de la reproduction. Un total de 62 poussins fut bagué. A Ezzemoul, sur les Hauts Plateaux, la reproduction débuta fin mai et concerna 4.500 couples, avec l'envol de 3.600 poussins dont 895 furent bagués. La reproduction à El Goléa et Bazer Sakra connut un échec, malgré l'utilisation de modèles en bois de flamants roses et de nids en ciment pour attirer des couples nicheurs. En 2012 et 2013, la sécheresse ne permit pas la reproduction dans aucun des sites de nidification connus. Un nouveau site de nidification a été découvert en 2012 à Chott Chergui, sur les Hauts Plateaux de l'ouest algérien.

Summary. In 2011, Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* successfully bred at two sites in Algeria. At Safioune, in the Sahara, breeding started in early January and involved 1,500 pairs. It was the first time the species bred at this site and 600 chicks fledged, despite an intrusion by jackals, which caused the cessation of breeding; 62 chicks were ringed. At Ezzemoul, on the Hauts Plateaux, breeding started in late May and involved 4,500 pairs; 3,500 chicks fledged, of which 895 were ringed. Nesting was unsuccessful at El Goléa and Bazer Sakra, where decoys of adult flamingos and nest mounds were used to attract nesting pairs. In 2012 and 2013, drought prevented successful breeding of Greater Flamingos at all known nesting sites. A new nesting site at Chott Chergui, on the western Hauts Plateaux, was discovered in 2012.

Although Greater Flamingos *Phoenicopterus roseus* must have bred in North Africa for millennia, until recently, only sporadic breeding events have been documented and very little is known of its breeding ecology in the region (Johnson & Cézilly 2007). In Algeria, successful breeding was first recorded in 2005 at Ezzemoul (Samraoui *et al.* 2006) and, subsequently, a second breeding site was located at El Goléa, in the Sahara (Bouzid *et al.* 2009). In 2003–12, 23 nesting attempts were made at five sites, with breeding proven on four occasions (Samraoui *et al.* 2010, Bouchibi Baaziz *et al.* 2010) and that at Chott Merouane requiring confirmation (Bensaci *et al.* 2010). We report here on nesting events and ringing efforts in 2011–13.

Methods

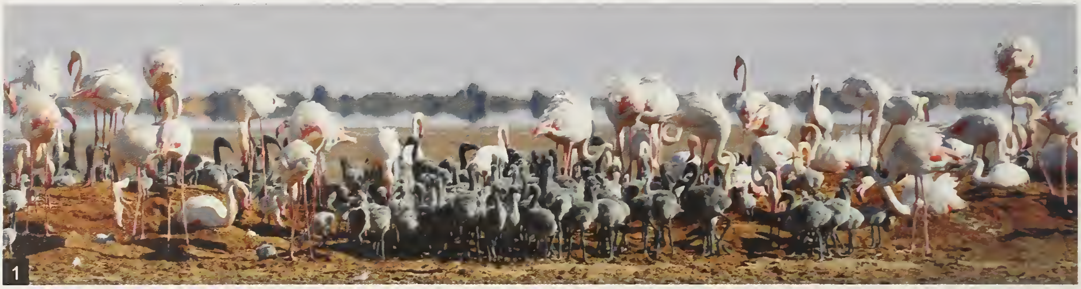
Four wetlands (El Goléa and Safioune, in the Sahara, and Ezzemoul and Bazer Sakra, in the eastern Hauts Plateaux) were monitored in 2011–13, with observations being made using telescopes (× 60) from the lakes' shores. Close to hatching, the colonies were approached to 50–100 m, using a hide, and any Darvic rings worn by Greater Flamingos were recorded. Prior to fledging, chicks were 'herded' into a specially built corral and banded with colour plastic rings bearing unique codes.

Results

In 2011, Greater Flamingos bred at Safioune and Ezzemoul. Nearly 10,000 ring resightings were recorded at various localities across the Sahara and the Algerian Hauts Plateaux indicating that birds breeding at the two sites originated from colonies throughout the Mediterranean basin. In 2012–13, the species did not attempt breeding because of drought, except at Safioune, where the attempt was unsuccessful.

Safioune (Sahara)

After two nesting attempts, in May and September 2010, the flamingos finally settled on a sandy dyke in the northern part of the sebkha in late December 2010. Flooding thwarted the first

1


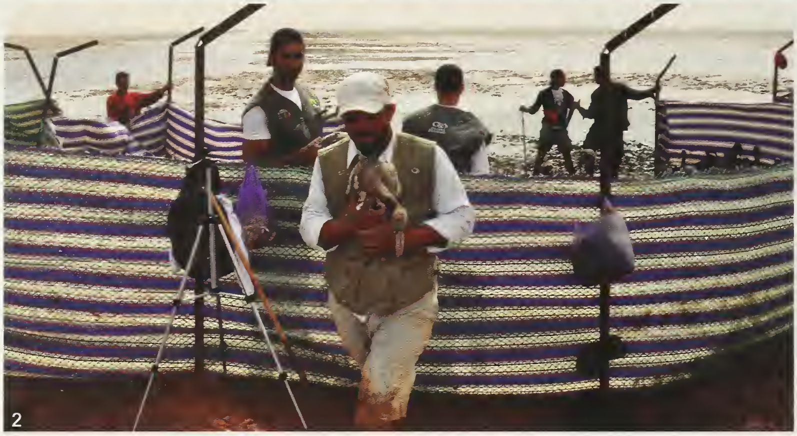
2


Figure 1. Partial view of the Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* colony at Safioune in 2011 (Boudjéma Samraoui)

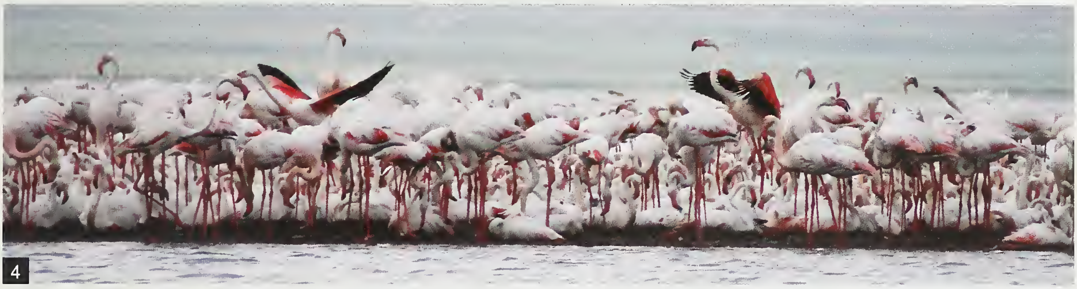
Vue partielle de la colonie de Flamants roses *Phoenicopterus roseus* de Safioune en 2011 (Boudjéma Samraoui)

Figures 2–3. The ringing operation at Safioune in 2011 (Boudjéma Samraoui)

L'opération de baguage à Safioune en 2011 (Boudjéma Samraoui)

3

birds to attempt breeding, and by 29 January just two chicks survived. Thereafter, the colony of 1,500 pairs retreated to higher ground and nested in groups along the dyke. In the first week of April incubation in some groups was virtually completed, whereas others were just starting, while a developing crèche held 600 chicks, some of them nearly two months old (Fig. 1). In mid April, the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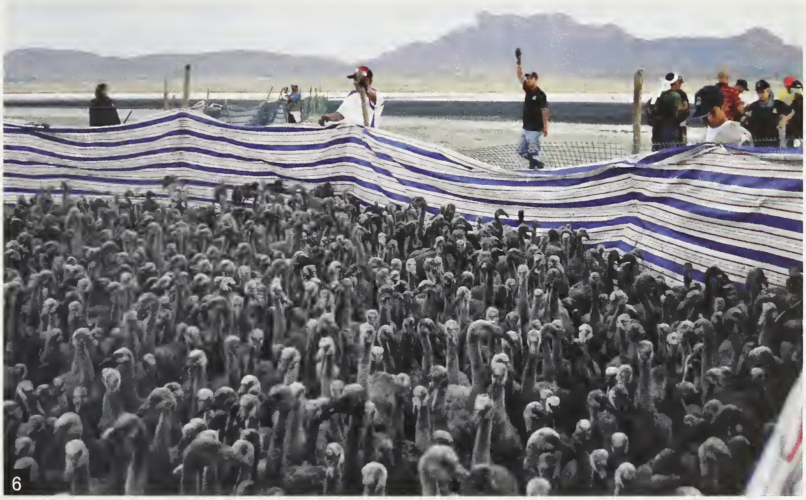
6

Figure 4. Partial view of the breeding colony at Ezzemoul in 2011 (Boudjéma Samraoui)

Vue partielle de la colonie de Flamants roses *Phoenicopterus roseus* de Ezzemoul en 2011 (Boudjéma Samraoui)

Figures 5–6. The ringing operation at Ezzemoul in 2011 (Boudjéma Samraoui)

L'opération de baguage à Ezzemoul en 2011 (Boudjéma Samraoui)

low water level surrounding the dyke permitted a group of Golden Jackals *Canis aureus* to enter the colony, which was consequently deserted. More than 20 chicks and six adults were killed, and >350 eggs abandoned. On 23 April, 60 volunteers coaxed a fraction of the remaining crèche towards a corral and 62 chicks were measured and ringed (Figs. 2–3).

The 2012 breeding attempt failed in part because of drought. Approximately 6,000 birds were present and dozens of pairs started incubating in late December, and by the end of January the first chicks hatched. However, strong winds displaced the shallow water surrounding the dune mounds where the colony had established, again permitting Golden Jackals to access the area. Although most adults apparently remained at the site, they did not breed again. In 2013, despite the drought, flamingos attempted to breed in early January, but the water around the mounds did not persist for long and they soon deserted.

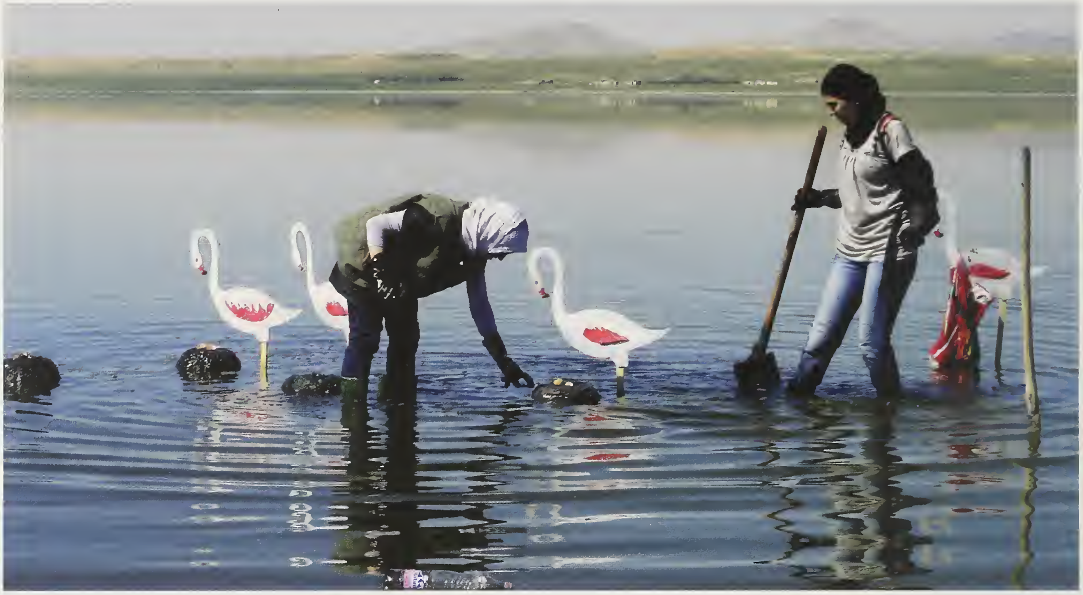

Figure 7. Installing artificial nests and wooden decoys of adult flamingos at Bazer Sakra in 2011 (Boudjéma Samraoui)
L'installation de nids en ciment et de modèles en bois de flamants roses à Bazer Sakra en 2011 (Boudjéma Samraoui)

Ezzemoul (Hauts Plateaux)

Following sparse rainfall in winter, the saline lake complex of Oum El Bouaghi was relatively dry in spring 2011. Rain in early May prompted the flamingos to visit the islet at Ezzemoul where nesting had previously occurred. From 12 May, the islet was occupied by nesting Slender-billed Gulls *Larus genei* and Pied Avocets *Recurvirostra avosetta*. On 19 May, 50 pairs of Greater Flamingo began incubating on the west side of the islet, gradually displacing the gulls. The number of pairs increased steadily; by 2 June there were 3,000 pairs and subsequently *c*.4,500 pairs (Fig. 4). Most of the breeding adults foraged in an adjacent lagoon, Chott Tinsilt, although some were recorded elsewhere (Tarf, Chott Gadaïne, Bazer Sakra). Chicks were starting to leave their nests on 22 June and a crèche began to form in the days that followed. Five Egyptian Vultures *Neophron percnopterus* predated the colony, but concentrated mainly on eggs and small (or already dead?) chicks. On 30 July, part of the crèche comprising 3,500 chicks was gently 'herded' into a corral and 895 chicks were measured and ringed (Figs. 5–6). Despite the drought, at least 70% of the ringed chicks fledged. In 2012–13, Ezzemoul was dry and breeding was not attempted.

Bazer Sakra (Hauts Plateaux)

In early April 2011, despite the water level at Bazer Sakra being just 20 cm, artificial nests and wooden decoys of adults were installed in the centre of the sebkha, 1.4 km from the shore. At this site, previous breeding attempts, all of which occurred close to the lake's shores, failed mainly because of disturbance by people and domestic animals. The decoy location was chosen based on a nesting attempt in summer 2010 (Bouchibi Baaziz *et al.* 2010). A total of 21 nest mounds based on two large piles of cement and mud were installed by ten volunteers. Each mound, weighing 12–13 kg, had a width of 40 cm and a height of 13 cm. Six wooden decoys of adult flamingos were also installed (Fig. 7).

Numbers of flamingos increased from 200 in April to 2,850 in May, but nesting did not start until 11 July, when 2,500 flamingos concentrated in the middle of the sebkha, with 350 individuals at the artificial mounds and decoys. The birds built 130 nests at a distance of 240 m from the artificial site. Incubation was inexplicably interrupted several times before the attempt was terminated 12 days later. During this breeding effort, *c*.600 flamingos were faithful to the artificial mounds, remaining slightly apart from the main colony, which increased to a max.

2,750 individuals. In 2012–13, Bazer Sakra was dry and breeding was not attempted.

Chott Chergui (Hauts Plateaux)

Old Greater Flamingo nests were discovered in June 2012, on an islet at Sebkhet El Gara (34°06.679'N 00°30.816'E) in the Chott Chergui, a vast salt lake of 855,500 ha that is adequately surveyed only from the air. At that time only Slender-billed Gulls, Gull-billed Terns *Gelochelidon nilotica*, Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus himantopus*, Pied Avocets and Kentish Plovers *Charadrius alexandrinus* were breeding.

El Goléa (Sahara)

In early March 2011, 550 flamingos started nest building but breeding was interrupted three weeks later for no apparent reason, by which time 37 nests had been constructed and just a single egg laid. In 2012–13, the birds settled on one of the islets and *c.*20 adults attempted to breed, but the effort failed in early May.

Discussion

Greater Flamingo twice bred successfully in Algeria in 2011 with a total of 4,100 chicks fledging at the two sites (3,500 at Ezzemoul and 600 at Safioune). Two other nesting attempts at two additional sites (Bazer Sakra and El Goléa) failed because of drought. Over the last 11 years (2003–13), 25 nesting attempts have occurred in Algeria, six of them at three sites, Ezzemoul, El Goléa and Safioune, producing a total of 19,323 fledglings. The intensive ring resighting effort over the last ten years, and molecular data, have confirmed the connectivity of the various Algerian colonies, with birds switching breeding site across the country and throughout the Mediterranean basin (Boucheker *et al.* 2011, Geraci *et al.* 2012). The number of breeding attempts, the frequency of successful efforts, and the first successful breeding in Europe of a flamingo originating from North Africa, confirm that Algeria can be considered part of the species' main breeding range in the Mediterranean basin; the same data support the hypothesis of a North African origin for European colonies (Samraoui *et al.* 2010).

Sahara

In 2011, successful breeding occurred for the first time at Safioune suggesting that the previous attempt in the Sahara at El Goléa (Bouzid *et al.* 2009) was not an exceptional event. Safioune, unlike El Goléa, is not only fed by flood water but also from the drainage system of Ouargla oasis and, because of its location, has the potential to become an important breeding site, being relatively free from human disturbance. The low water levels at El Goléa may have prevented the species from breeding in 2011–13, but it is also the case that Safioune attracted some of those adults that had previously bred at El Goléa. Those flamingos that were present at El Goléa may have been mostly young birds incapable of breeding, despite intensively displaying in late winter.

Hauts Plateaux

Ezzemoul, in the Hauts Plateaux, has become one of the most important breeding sites in the western Mediterranean, both in terms of the number of breeding pairs (4,500–12,000) and frequency of occupation (nine nesting attempts in the last ten years, four of them successful). In the neighbouring wetland complex of Bazer Sakra, successful breeding has not yet occurred, despite use of nest mounds and decoys, techniques that have yielded success elsewhere (Stevens 1991, Rendon-Martos & Johnson 1996, O'Connell-Rodwell *et al.* 2004, McAlpin 2010). However, the prevailing drought in recent years has been a major constraint. The newly discovered nesting site in the Chott Chergui extends the breeding range of Greater Flamingo in Algeria and we believe that further breeding attempts can be expected at this huge salt lake.

Successful breeding at natural sites in North Africa, as elsewhere, is clearly dependent on local conditions as low water levels permit predators such as jackals, feral dogs and Wild Boars *Sus scrofa* to access the colonies. Human disturbance also is a threat to flamingo colonies although protection of breeding sites may constitute a palliative solution in the absence of full public awareness (Béchet & Samraoui 2010).

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Dusky Twinspot *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea*, a new host species for indigobirds *Vidua*

Michael S. L. Mills[a,b]

Pintadinho-cinza *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea*, uma nova espécie hospedeiro de viúvas *Vidua* em Angola. Nas terras altas de Angola, foi encontrada uma população de viúvas (*Vidua* sp.) a imitar as vocalizações do pintadinho-cinza *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea*. As características morfológicas da viúva—brilho azul pouco marcado, asas castanhas, bico esbranquiçado e patas rosadas—sugerem tratar-se da viúva-negra *Vidua funerea*. Os sonogramas das vocalizações da viúva mostram que, na maior parte das vezes, estas copiam a vocalização de contacto do pintadinho-cinza. No entanto, outras vocalizações gravadas incluem o que parecem ser cópias do canto, gritos de alarme e chamadas de solicitação de alimentos do pintadinho-cinza—tudo vocalizações mal conhecidas ou por documentar nesta espécie. Este é o primeiro registo de parasitismo no ninho de pintadinhos-cinza, e esta é apenas a segunda espécie de hospedeiro registada para a viúva-negra.

Summary. A population of indigobirds mimicking Dusky Twinspot *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* was found in the Angolan highlands. Morphological characters—dullish, blue body gloss, brown wings, whitish bill and pinkish legs—most closely match Dusky Indigobird *Vidua funerea*. Sound-recordings of mimicry depicted by sonograms include, most commonly, the contact call of Dusky Twinspot. However, a range of other vocalisations was also recorded, including the presumed song, begging calls and alarm calls, vocalisations which are poorly known or undocumented for Dusky Twinspot. This is the first evidence of brood parasitism of Dusky Twinspot and only the second recorded host for Dusky Indigobird.

The indigobirds are members of the brood-parasitic family Viduidae and specialise on hosts in the family Estrildidae (Payne 2004). Most indigobirds parasitise firefinches (*Lagonosticta* spp.), although Orange-breasted Waxbill *Amandava subflava*, Black-faced Quailfinch *Ortygospiza atricollis* and twinspots of the genera *Hypargos* and *Euschistospiza* are also known hosts. Indigobirds typically specialise on a single host species, with exceptions including Cameroon Indigobird *V. camerunensis* and Village Indigobird *V. chalybeata*, both of which possess multiple hosts (Payne 2004, Payne *et al.* 2005).

Evidence suggests that indigobird species have evolved rapidly. Assortative mating / mate recognition—based on females identifying conspecific males by the mimicry of host species vocalisations in their songs, a result of host-specific imprinting—reinforces reproductive boundaries (Klein & Payne 1998, Payne *et al.* 2000, Payne & Sorenson 2004). Mimetic song of male indigobirds may incorporate a wide range of host vocalisations, including songs and calls (alarm, contact, flight and begging) (Payne 1973, 1982, Payne *et al.* 2005). Because indigobirds learn calls and songs from the species that rears them and adult males incorporate

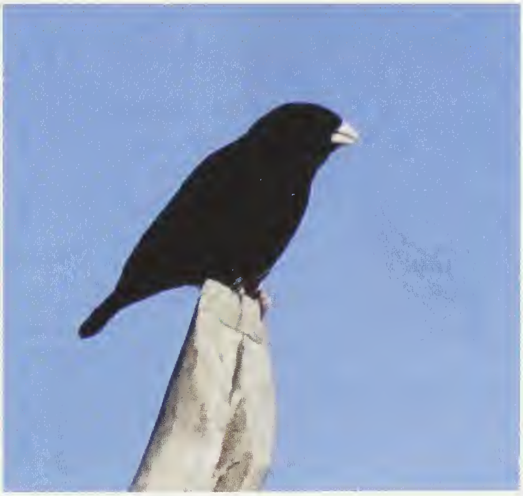
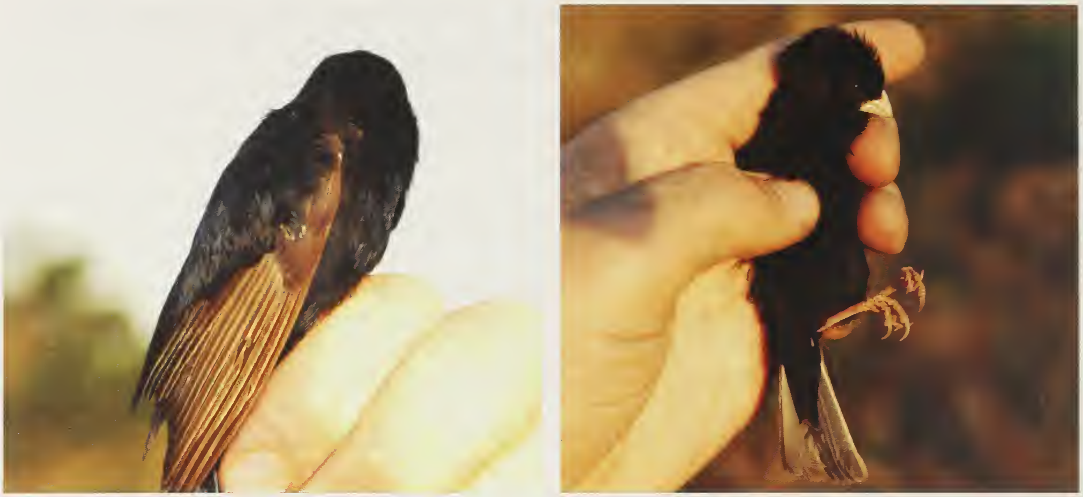


Figure 1. Male indigobird *Vidua* on its song perch at Mount Moco, Angola. It included mimicry of Dusky Twinspot *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* vocalisations in its song (see sonograms) and had a whitish bill, pinkish legs and dull blue gloss, the latter feature not visible in this image (M. S. L. Mills)

Figura 1. Macho de viúva (*Vidua* sp.) a cantar no Monto Moco, Angola. O seu canto incluía imitações de vocalizações do pintadinho-cinza *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* (ver sonogramas); apresentava um bico esbranquiçado, patas rosadas e um brilho azul sombrio que não é visível nesta imagem (M. S. L. Mills)



Figures 2–3. The male indigobird trapped in May 2013 near Mount Moco, Angola. It included mimicry of Dusky Twinspot *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* in its song, had brown wings, a dull blue body gloss, whitish bill and pinkish legs (M. S. L. Mills)

Figuras 2–3. Macho de viúva (*Vidua* sp.) capturado em maio de 2013 perto do Monto Moco, Angola. O seu canto incluía imitações de vocalizações do pintadinho-cinza *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea*; as suas asas eram castanhas, o corpo tinha um brilho azul sombrio, o bico esbranquiçado e as patas rosadas (M. S. L. Mills)

these vocalisations into their own songs (Payne *et al.* 1998), such mimicry is important in field identification and provides solid indirect evidence of parasitism of host species, although accurate identification of male indigobirds relies on an agreement between host species mimicry and morphology (Sorenson *et al.* 2003, Payne *et al.* 2005). Important morphological characters for field identification are the colour and intensity of plumage gloss, and the colour of the primary feathers and bare parts (Payne *et al.* 1992a, Payne 1996). It is important to note that differences between species are subtle and can be difficult to judge under field conditions, unless particularly good views are obtained under favourable light (pers. obs.).

On 13 May 2011 I was travelling from Lobito towards Mount Moco in Huambo Province, Angola, when I observed a male indigobird mimicking Dusky Twinspot *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* in open woodland at 12°36.86'S 14°55.50'E (1,290 m altitude). Careful observation indicated a blue gloss, white bill and pinkish legs. Unfortunately, I had failed to bring mist-nets with me, so could not trap the bird for closer examination. On the same trip, I found two more male indigobirds mimicking Dusky Twinspot at Kanjonde village, Mount Moco (12°42.83'S 15°15.26'E; 1,930 m). They possessed the same morphological features as the first bird (Fig. 1). On 15 May I recorded the song of one of these birds, including extensive mimicry, using an Olympus LS-11 digital sound-recorder (recording in 16-bit WAVE format at 96 kHz). On departing Mount Moco a few days later, I observed another similar male indigobird also mimicking Dusky Twinspot. At least four males all mimicking Dusky Twinspot suggested that the local population of indigobirds were brood parasites of this species, perhaps unsurprisingly given that firefinches *Lagonosticta* are rare in the Angolan highlands and absent at Mount Moco, whereas Dusky Twinspot is common there (Mills *et al.* 2011).

The timing of all subsequent visits to Mount Moco lay outside the indigobird breeding season, so no further observations were made until May 2013, when at least four males were found along the entrance road to Kanjonde village and around the village itself, all of them mimicking Dusky Twinspot. One male was sound-recorded at 12°39.46'S 15°11.14'E (1,790 m), then trapped in a mist-net and photographed, and blood samples taken (available upon request to researchers

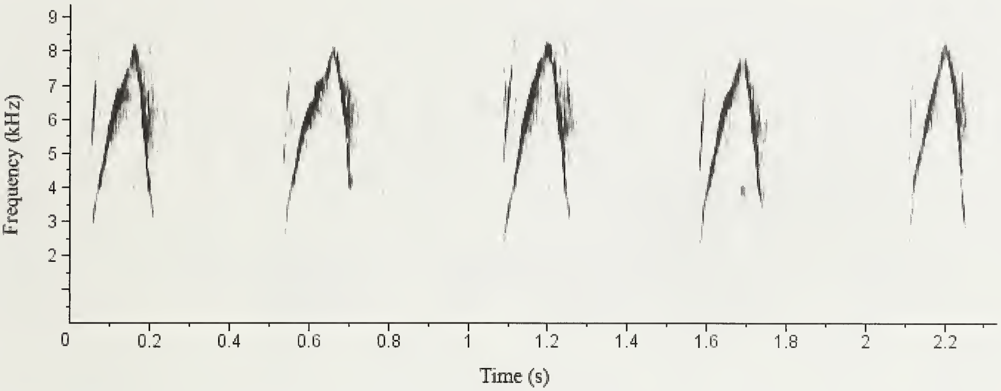


Figure 4. Sonogram of the *tsyip-tsyip* contact call of Dusky Twinspot *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea*, as presented in Mills (2009), based on recordings in Mills (2007).

Figura 4. Sonograma da vocalização de contacto (*tsip-tsip*) do pintadinho-cinza *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* publicado em Mills (2009) a partir de gravações de Mills (2007).

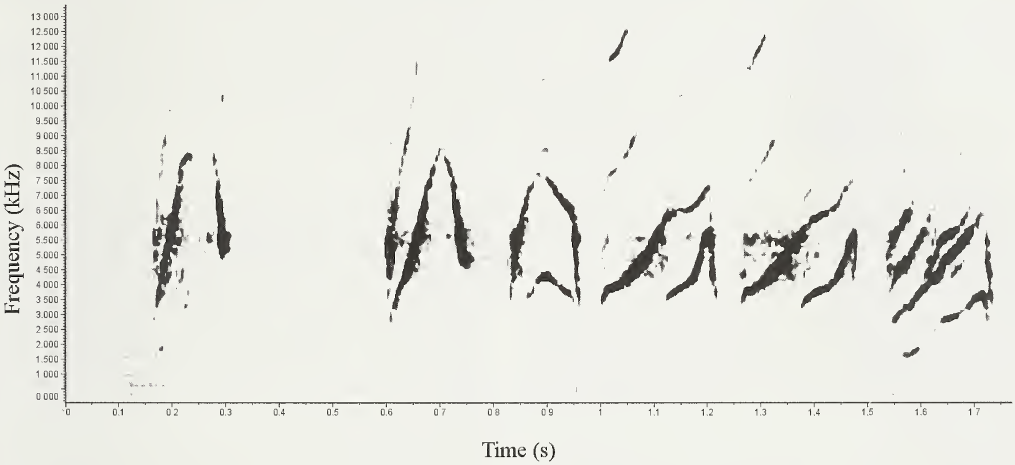


Figure 5. Sonogram of mimicry of Dusky Twinspot *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* by an indigobird at Mount Moco, Angola. The first two notes are mimicked contact calls of Dusky Twinspot; note the similarity in structure with the calls in Fig. 4. The notes that follow are probably mimicry of the begging call of Dusky Twinspot.

Figura 5. Sonograma da mímica de pintadinho-cinza *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* feita por uma vidua do Monte Moco, Angola. As primeiras duas notas são cópias das vocalizações de contacto do pintadinho-cinza; note a similaridade de estrutura com as vocalizações apresentadas na Fig. 4. As notas seguintes são provavelmente imitações das vocalizações das crias de pintadinho-cinza quando solicitam comida.

studying genetic variation of indigobirds). In common with previously observed birds, it had a dullish blue gloss, brown wings, whitish bill and pinkish legs (Figs. 2–3).

Subsequently, sound-recordings made of these indigobirds were manipulated using Goldwave Software (www.goldwave.com) and sonograms of one individual recorded in 2011 produced with Raven Lite software (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2003–2005), as evidence of mimicry. These sonograms are presented alongside a sonogram of Dusky Twinspot contact calls from Mills (2009) (Fig. 4). An edited, 140-seconds recording of the song of this indigobird, exhibiting both extensive mimicry and non-mimetic song, can be downloaded at http://www.birdsangola.org/downloads.htm.

Current knowledge of Dusky Twinspot vocalisations is limited, with no recordings in the British Library Sound Archive (http://www.

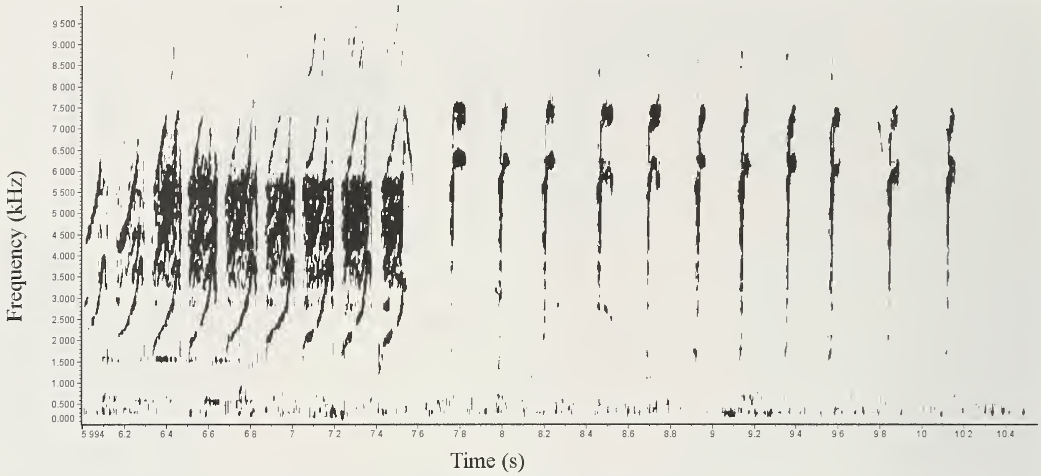


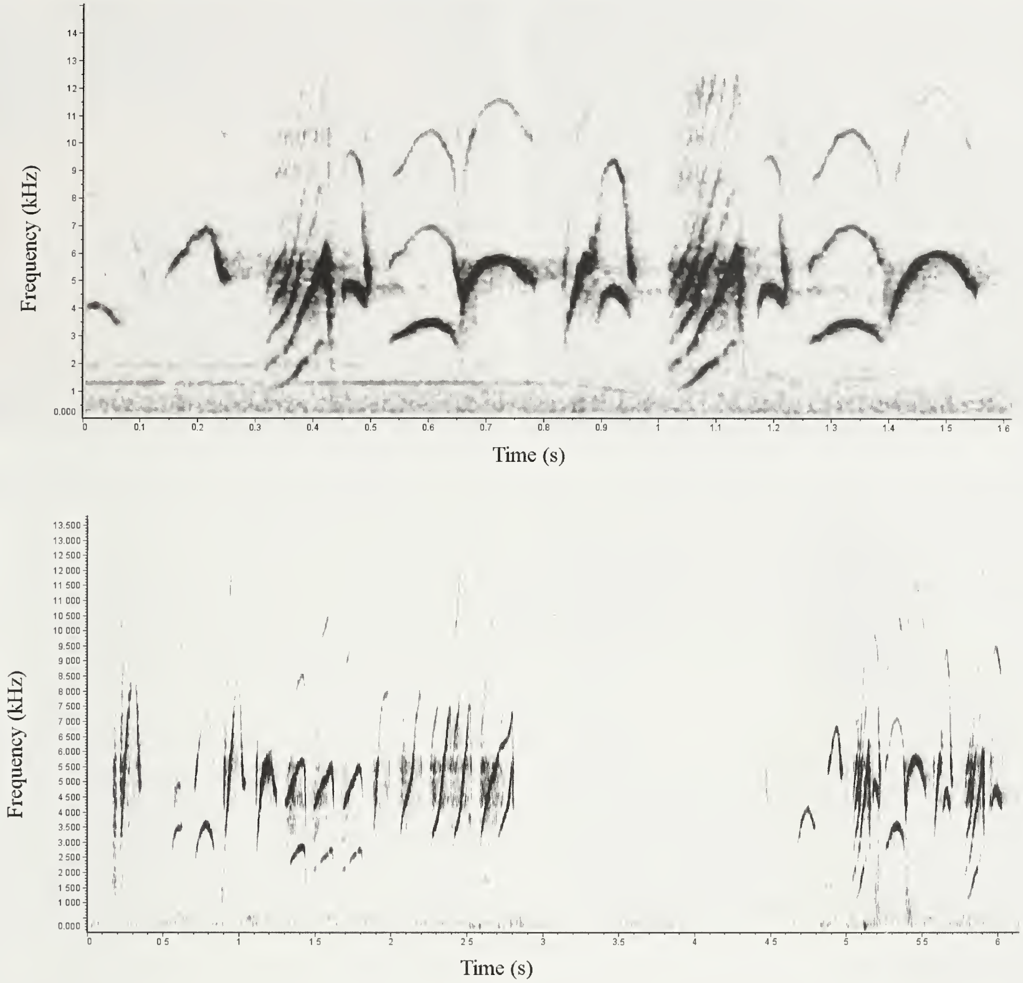
Figure 6. Sonogram of two different vocalisations of Dusky Twinspot *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* mimicked by an indigobird at Mount Moco, Angola. The first series of identical notes, a rapid, nasal complaining, appears to represent begging calls. The second series of identical notes are a sharp, metallic *tink tink tink* that may be alarm calls.

Figura 6. Sonograma de duas vocalizações diferentes de pintadinho-cinza *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* que são imitadas por uma viúva (*Vidua* sp.) do Monte Moco, Angola. A primeira série de notas idênticas, lembrando uma lamúria rápida e nasalada, parece representar a vocalização de solicitação de alimentos pelas crias. A segunda série de notas idênticas correspondem a um *tink tink think* forte que possivelmente é um grito de alarme.

bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/sound/wildsounds/wildlife.html), the Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds (Cornell University), xeno-canto archive (www.xeno-canto.org) or on Chappuis (2000), other than those made by the author (Mills 2007). The only recorded vocalisation is the contact call, a short, dry *tsyip-tsyip* (Goodwin 1982, Mills 2009) which is often heard in the field (pers. obs). Other vocalisations, which I have never heard, are described as follows: the song is a 'varying series of not very loud or striking notes', the begging call is a loud 'visvisvisvisvis...' and the distance / alarm call is a 'tsvilip', similar to but louder than the contact call (Goodwin 1982, Fry & Keith 2004).

The contact call was the most frequently mimicked vocalisation in Angola (Fig. 5), although several other vocalisations were mimicked too. These were a rapid, nasal 'complaining' judged to be begging calls (Fig. 6), a sharp, metallic *tink tink tink* presumed to be an alarm call and seemingly undescribed previously (Fig. 6), and a rapid, musical series of high-pitched whistles that rose and fell in pitch (Figs. 7–8), presumed to be the song based on its similarity to that of some other estrildid finches (Fry & Keith 2004). This is not the first time new finch vocalisations have been documented first in indigobird mimicry; vocalisations mimicked by Jos Plateau Indigobird *V. maryae* led to the discovery of a new species, Rock Firefinch *L. sanguinodorsalis* (Payne 1998).

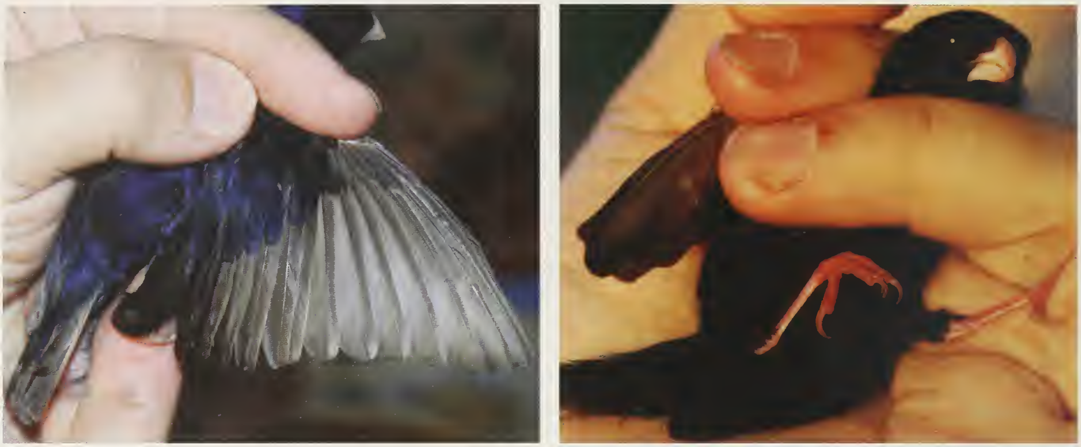
Three species of indigobird occur in Angola: Dusky Indigobird *V. funerea*, Village Indigobird and Purple Indigobird *V. purpurascens* (Dean 2000). While the latter two are known only from the more arid south, Dusky Indigobird has been recorded over much of the central plateau, including the highlands of Cuanza Sul and Huambo, and occurs throughout the mesic savannahs of southern and eastern Africa (Payne *et al.* 1992b, Payne 2004), making it the most likely candidate. Dusky Indigobird is characterised by a dullish blue to blue-green plumage gloss, brownish primaries and whitish bill, sometimes with a pinkish tinge (Payne 1996). Two subspecies are recognised: nominate *funerea* with orange-red legs and feet, occurring from southern Mozambique to eastern South Africa, and *nigerrima* with pale purplish legs and feet, in Angola, Zambia and central Mozambique in the south to western Kenya in the north (Hockey *et al.* 2005). Village Indigobird has a stronger blue gloss and orange-red legs, and Purple Indigobird a more purple gloss, although differences from the latter species are very minor.



Figures 7–8. Sonograms of mimicry of the poorly described song of Dusky Twinspot *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* by an indigobird at Mount Moco, Angola. The notes are a rapid, musical series of high-pitched whistles that rise and fall in pitch, similar to that made by other species of Estrildidae (Fry & Keith 2004).

Figuras 7–8. Sonogramas da mímica do pouco conhecido canto de pintadinho-cinza *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* por uma viúva (*Vidua* sp.) do Monte Moco, Angola. As notas são uma série musical rápida de assobios agudos, cuja frequência sobe e desce, tal como acontece noutras espécies da família Estrildidae (Fry & Keith 2004), a que o pintadinho pertence.

Birds described in this paper from the Angolan highlands most closely match the *nigerrima* subspecies of Dusky Indigobird, although they have pinkish rather than pale purplish legs. However, Dusky Indigobirds mimicking African Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricata* (the only previously known host of this species: Payne 2004) captured at Lagoa Carumbo in north-east Angola possessed the same features, including leg colour (Figs. 9–10). While these Dusky Twinspot-mimicking indigobirds may represent a separate species, their morphological features match Dusky Indigobird well, so I present these data tentatively in evidence of Dusky Twinspot being the second recorded host of Dusky Indigobird. My observations also represent the first evidence of brood parasitism of Dusky Twinspot. By indirect evidence, my data expand the known repertoire of Dusky Twinspot vocalisations. Interestingly, mimicry of Dusky Twinspot vocalisations is incorporated in the song of Thick-billed Seedeater *Crithagra burtoni* (Mills 2009), along with the calls of many other species.



Figures 9–10. Male Dusky Indigobird *Vidua funerea* trapped at Lagoa Carumbo, Lunda Norte, north-east Angola, on 29 April 2011. It was mimicking African Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricata* and possessed the same morphological features as the birds mimicking Dusky Twinspot *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* in the Angolan highlands, namely a blue gloss, brownish wings, whitish bill (with a pink tinge) and pinkish legs (M. S. L. Mills)

Figuras 9–10. Macho de viúva-negra *Vidua funerea* capturado na Lagoa Carumbo, Lunda Norte, noroeste de Angola, 29 de abril de 2011. Este macho imitava o peito-de-fogo-de-bico-azul *Lagonosticta rubricata* e possuía as mesmas características morfológicas das aves que imitavam o pintadinho-cinza *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* nas terras altas angolanas – nomeadamente: um brilho azul, asas acastanhadas, bico esbranquiçado (com um tom rosado) e patas rosadas (M. S. L. Mills)

More and closer attention is revealing a greater number of indigobird hosts and a more complex web of host-and-parasite relationships. New data may better unravel diversity within this interesting group, and may provide new insights into indigobird species limits and variability.

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Observations of the rarely seen aerial display of Short-winged Cisticola *Cisticola brachypterus*

Michael S. L. Mills

Observações da parada aérea, raramente observada, da fuinha-d'asa-curta *Cisticola brachypterus*. A fuinha-d'asa-curta *Cisticola brachypterus* realiza uma parada nupcial raramente documentada. Com base em observações feitas no Monte Moco, Angola, apresento a primeira descrição deste comportamento em mais de 50 anos e descrevo pela primeira vez os sons emitidos durante a sua exibição aérea.

Short-winged Cisticola *Cisticola brachypterus* is widespread in the Afrotropics, occurring in mesic savannas throughout sub-Sahararan Africa (Urban *et al.* 1997, Hockey *et al.* 2005), including most of the Angolan plateau (Dean 2000). It is often common and many observers will be familiar with a small, plain bird perched atop a tree or bush, uttering its feeble song during the breeding season. What is much less appreciated is that the male, like several other smaller *Cisticola* usually referred to as 'cloud-scrapers', performs a striking aerial display during the breeding season (Lynes 1930; see below).

In February 2012 I was driving through the grasslands at the foot of Mount Moco, Huambo, Angola, when I noticed a small cisticola perform an aerial display. The only small cisticolas recorded at the site are Short-winged, Neddicky *C. fulvicapilla* and Wing-snapping Cisticolas *C. ayresii* (Mills *et al.* 2011), with Zitting Cisticola *C. juncidis* found nearby. I was aware of an aerial display only for Wing-snapping Cisticola, which this bird, based on its longer tail, clearly was not. Having watched several displaying birds, I finally managed to observe them perched, and confirmed that they looked and sounded identical to Short-winged Cisticola. As I was unaware of Short-winged Cisticola possessing such a display, I wondered whether the birds might represent a cryptic species. However, a search of the literature revealed a detailed description of Short-winged Cisticola's display, performed at a height of *c.*60 m and lasting several minutes, based on observations from Kenya to Angola and on birds of several subspecies, including *isabellinus* from near Morogoro, Tanzania, *reichenowi* from near Mombasa, Kenya, *ankole* from Uganda, *brachypterus* from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and *loanda* from Angola (Lynes 1930), whose description merits repeating here:

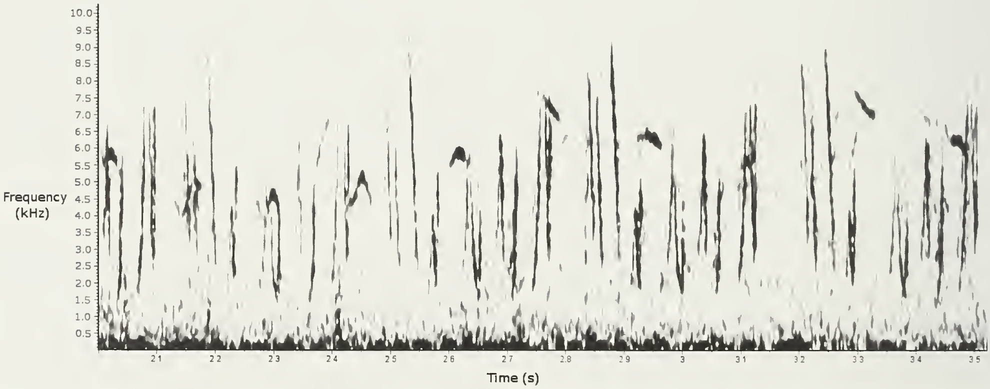

Figure 1. Sonogram drawn from a 1.5-second snippet of the sound made by Short-winged Cisticola *Cisticola brachypterus* during the dive phase of the display flight, recorded at Mount Moco, Angola. The more drawn-out notes at 4.0–5.0 kHz are the background song of another, perched Short-winged Cisticola.

Figura 1. Sonograma retirado de um fragmento de 1.5 segundo do som feito pela fuinha-d'asa-curta *Cisticola brachypterus* durante o mergulho executado durante o seu voo de exibição, gravado no Monte Moco, Angola. As notas mais arrastadas entre 4.0 e 5.0 kHz provêm de outra fuinha-d'asa-curta a cantar pousada mais longe.

'The bird rises, generally if not always from his song-perch, with whirring wings, alternating with momentary breaks and dips in the track, up and up into the air, and then commences to cruise around in circles very like [*Cisticola*] *brunnescens* does, but looking different in the proportionately longer tail being kept slightly expanded and flirted in a loose, disjointed way... On conclusion of the high cruise, comes the thunderbolt dive down nearly to the ground, the upward swerve, once or more repeated, and then the final flop down into the grass just like the Cloud-scrapers. Probably the cruise is accompanied by song, but it must be too feeble for the observer to hear it: we never did, except once during the ascent.'

There appear to be almost no other published first-hand accounts of this display: those of Chapin (1953) and van Someren (1956) are apparently the only ones. Chapin (1953) also relates a fable from the Mangbetu tribe of Oriental Province, north-eastern DRC, in which elephants are said to fear the bird because once, hearing the swish of the descending bird, an elephant raised its trunk. The tiny bird shot down the trunk and pierced the brain, with mortal result to the elephant!

Given the dearth of previous accounts, I summarise my observations here; this general description is based on the behaviour of at least five different individuals giving similar displays comprised of all phases, whereas the duration of the phases is based on one bird that was timed during three display flights. The display has four phases:

[1] Climb: the bird takes off from its perch and climbs to *c*.50 m above ground over a period of 35–45 seconds (range; *n* = 3 displays from one bird). The climb is usually gradual and in broad circles, but can be more direct.

[2] Cruise: the bird flies in wide circles at the pinnacle of its climb for 10–20 seconds (same three displays). During one display the bird performed a short 'mock dive'. No vocalisations were heard.

[3] Dive: the bird enters a vertical freefall, always accompanied by strange *prrrrtttprrrttprrtprtprt* noises (see Fig. 1), perhaps made by the wings, during the entire descent. Just before reaching the ground it swerves back up to 5–10 m above ground. This takes *c*.10 seconds. A few feeble calls were heard (*cf.* the tape-recording at www.birdsangola.org/downloads.htm).

[4] Rocking: the bird flies back and forth a few times for 15–20 seconds at 5–10 m above the ground before landing.

This appears to be the first description of sounds made during aerial displays. It would be interesting to learn whether these displays are made throughout the species' range and whether they are always accompanied by the same sounds, as variations in display could be taxonomically informative.

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Notes on the breeding ecology and conservation of the Critically Endangered Dwarf Olive Ibis *Bostrychia bocagei*

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Notes sur la nidification et la protection de l'Ibis de Bocage *Bostrychia bocagei*, espèce « Gravement menacée d'extinction ». Des données sont présentées sur la nidification de l'Ibis de Bocage *Bostrychia bocagei*, y compris la première description du nid et des œufs. Cette espèce endémique de São Tomé a besoin des mesures de protection urgentes.

Summary. We present information on the breeding ecology of the Dwarf Olive Ibis *Bostrychia bocagei*, including the first description of the nest and eggs, and discuss the need for urgent conservation measures to save this São Tomé endemic.

Dwarf Olive Ibis *Bostrychia bocagei* is the world's smallest ibis and probably also the most threatened, being classified as Critically Endangered (BirdLife International 2013). It only occurs in some of the best-preserved patches of lowland forest in southern São Tomé. Some authors do not regard it as a species (Jones & Tye 2006), but there have been no recent attempts to clarify its affinities using molecular techniques (Melo & Jones 2010).

The taxon was discovered in the late 1880s by the Portuguese collector Francisco Newton, and first described by Bocage (1889a,b). There were few records in the 20th century, nearly all of them in the island's southern forests. Recent observations outside the species' known distribution require confirmation, but its range undoubtedly has been greatly reduced through habitat loss (Jones & Tye 2006). Most known localities lie within the recently created Obô Natural Park and are protected by their natural inaccessibility (Fig. 1). Hunting is probably the greatest threat, with regular reports of birds being killed (Carvalho 2008, Álvares in press).

Little is known concerning its ecology. The species appears to prefer primary forest with an open understorey on more level ground, where it feeds, flushing into the trees if disturbed (Jones & Tye 2006, Leventis & Olmos 2009). Although it is thought to breed during the wet season, only two nests have been found (BirdLife International 2013) while a female collected in November had enlarged gonads (Jones & Tye 2006). Here we provide new data on the breeding ecology of Dwarf Olive Ibis, including the first description of its eggs and nest.

Methods

São Tomé (00°25'–00°01'N 06°28'–06°45'E) is a small oceanic island of 852 km² (Jones *et al.* 1991) that holds 20 endemic bird species—a remarkable number given its size (Stattersfield *et al.* 1998). Half of these are currently threatened (BirdLife International 2013). Many analyses have highlighted the island's outstanding biodiversity value (e.g. Collar & Stuart 1985, Myers *et al.* 2000, Buchanan *et al.* 2011), but little has been done to protect it (Balmford & Long 1995).

Our field work was centred around the ruined plantation houses of Monte Carmo. The area comprises old-growth forest with patches of secondary forest, mostly inside Obô Natural Park. An oil palm plantation is currently being replanted, threatening the long-term survival of these forests and the ibis, either directly or via other threats, such as hunting. We surveyed the area in September and December 2008, and April, July and November 2009, following predefined transects at a slow pace (Cullen & Rudran 2003). All ibis observations were registered using GPS. Nests were followed to collect data on breeding ecology.

Results

Dwarf Olive Ibises were recorded 54 times and proved reasonably easy to find and to be well distributed across the study area (Fig. 1). We found two active nests: the first on 22 November 2009 and the second on 29 November. Both had incubating birds, contained two eggs and were constructed on *Cleistanthus liberica* (Phyllanthaceae) trees (locally known as *viro*) (Fig. 2a). Nest 1 was 8 m above ground, nest 2 was 16 m up. On 20, 26 and

27 December the incubating birds left the nests on our approach, but when the nests were visited again on 13 February 2010, the only activity was a bird that departed nest 1. Since the nests were apparently not visited by the birds during the three subsequent days, we decided to collect them. Nest 1 contained two eggs, one intact, the other broken and with a discernible embryo (Fig. 2b). Nest 2 was empty. Both nests comprised small twigs and nest 1 also included unidentified fresh plant material; their diameters were 370 × 360 mm (nest 1) and 330 × 260 mm (nest 2). The interior of both nests was shallow and lined with leaf litter, as well as both flight and down feathers. The intact egg measured 54.0 × 37.5 mm and was slightly off-white, with short, irregular, brown-violet lines and brown speckles (Fig. 2c). All of this material is currently housed at the 'Associação dos Biólogos Santomenses' collection, Instituto Superior Politécnico, São Tomé.

Discussion

Dwarf Olive Ibis has the smallest range of any of São Tomé's endemic birds, it probably occupying significantly less than the 210 km^2 suggested by BirdLife International (2013; Fig. 1). The scarcity

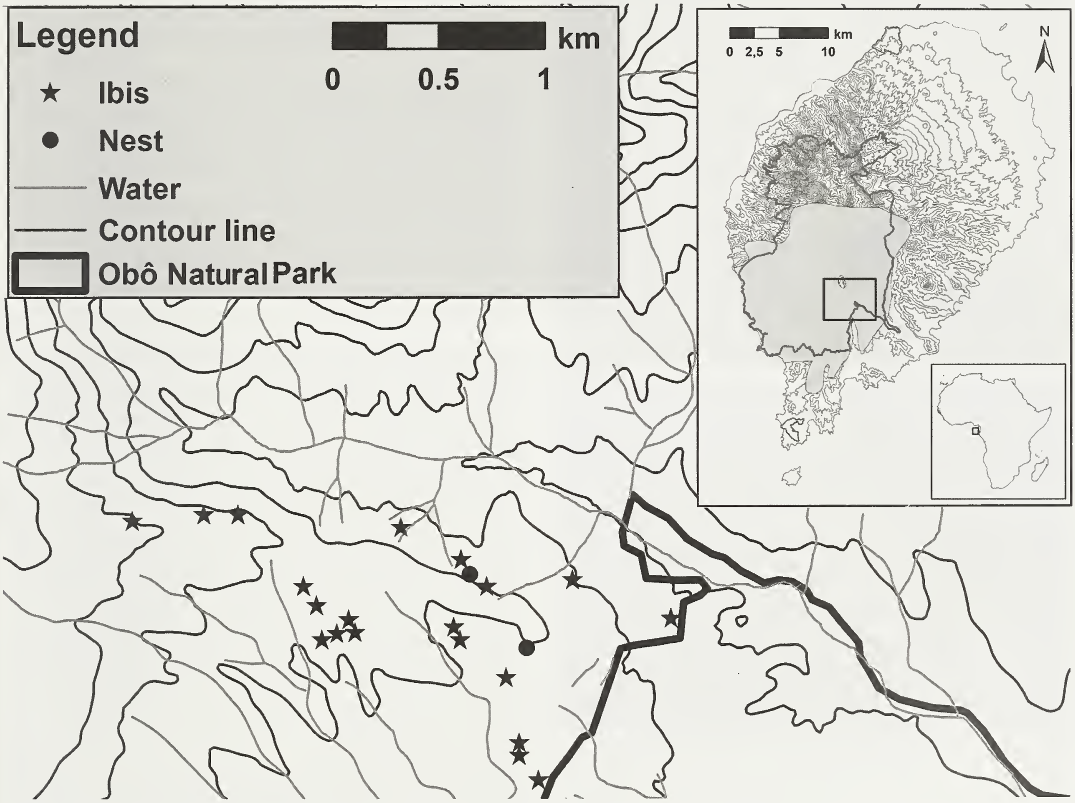

Figure 1. Map of São Tomé showing the study area and distribution of Dwarf Olive Ibis *Bostrychia bocagei*. The inset shows the island's topography, the location of Obô Natural Park (blank polygon), the distribution of Dwarf Olive Ibis (grey-shaded polygon—adapted from BirdLife International & NatureServe 2011) and the location of the study area (blank rectangle). The maps were produced from Wojtusiak *et al.* (2006), under a Creative Commons non-commercial derived copyright license, and therefore can be used by future authors without specific permission but with due acknowledgement to the original authors (see http://www.ggcg.st and http://www.creativecommons.org).

Carte de São Tomé indiquant la zone d'étude et la distribution de l'Ibis de Bocage *Bostrychia bocagei*. La carte en cartouche montre la topographie de l'île, l'emplacement du Parc Naturel de Obô (polygone en blanc), la distribution de l'Ibis de Bocage (polygone gris—adapté de BirdLife International & NatureServe 2011) et la localisation de la zone d'étude (rectangle). Les cartes sont produites d'après Wojtusiak *et al.* (2006), sous la « Creative Commons non-commercial derived copyright license », et peuvent donc être reproduites sans autorisation spécifique, sous réserve de dûment mentionner la source (see http://www.ggcg.st and http://www.creativecommons.org).

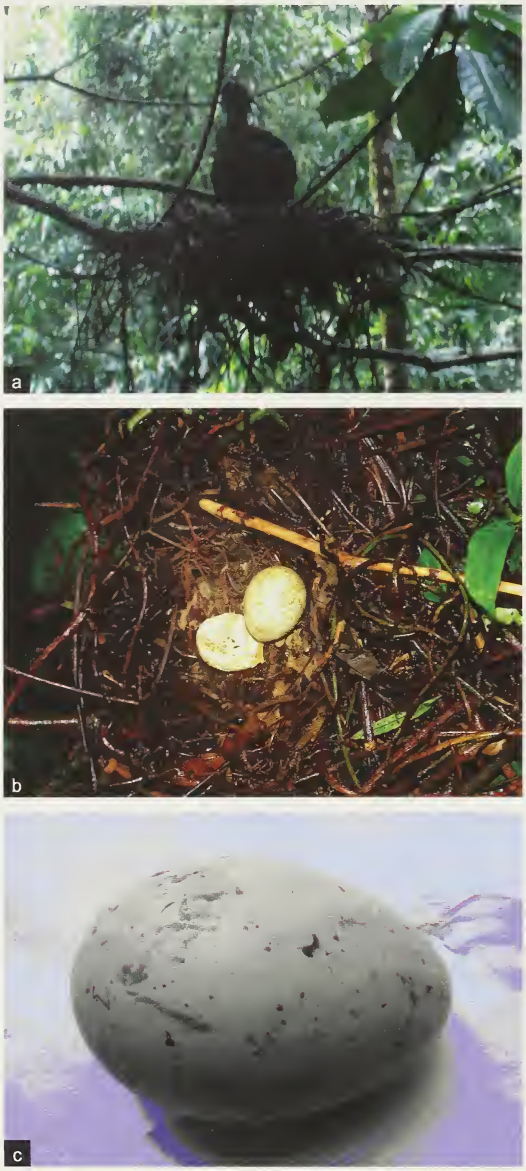

Figure 2. (a) Adult Dwarf Olive Ibis *Bostrychia bocagei* at nest; (b) interior of nest with two eggs; (c) egg (Hugulay Maia)

(a) Ibis de Bocage *Bostrychia bocagei* adulte au nid; (b) l'intérieur du nid contenant deux œufs; (c) œuf (Hugulay Maia)

of records is presumably due to the restricted number of areas where the species occurs, as it appears reasonably common in our study area, although this is the best-known stronghold (Leventis & Olmos 2009).

Our discovery of active nests in November–December matches Correia's female specimen with enlarged gonads in November (Jones & Tye 2006). Dwarf Olive Ibis appears to nest higher above ground than congenerics, e.g. Olive Ibis *B. olivacea* (4–8 m high: Hancock *et al.* 1992) or Hadada Ibis *B. hagadesh* (1–6 m high: Perez del Val 1996). This might reflect the availability of higher nesting sites, but also predation avoidance. Unlike other species in the *B. olivacea* group, Dwarf Olive Ibis does not necessarily appear to nest close to running water (Fig. 1). Nest failures might reflect predation by snakes or introduced mammals, such as rats *Rattus* sp. or Mona Monkeys *Cercopithecus mona*.

The endemic subspecies of Olive Ibis on the neighbouring island of Príncipe, *B. olivacea rothschildii*, became extinct, probably within the last century (Jones & Tye 2006). This demonstrates the vulnerability of forest ibis populations on small islands, and emphasises the need for urgent measures to conserve Dwarf Olive Ibis. In order for such measures to be effective, a better understanding of its distribution and abundance is required, as unidentified strongholds may exist in the rugged and little-visited centre of the island. It is also important to gain a better understanding of its ecology, including foraging, habitat selection and predators.

Some areas where the ibis occurs are becoming more accessible to hunters and other forest users, such as loggers and wine palm collectors, who might occasionally kill the species for food or contribute to overall habitat degradation. Its apparently clustered distribution and size make it particularly vulnerable to hunting, especially given the scarcity of large quarry species on the island (Carvalho 2008, Álvares in press). Any conservation measures should focus on working with those people who might hunt the birds. Given the apparent sensitivity of the species to disturbance, it is also advisable to control tourist access to sites where the species is known to occur, especially during the breeding season.

Acknowledgements

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Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris* and Cape Teal *Anas capensis* on the Ounianga Lakes, northern Chad

Robert Schönbrodt

Sarcelle marbrée *Marmaronetta angustirostris* et Canard du Cap Anas capensis sur les lacs d'Ounianga, Chad du nord. En janvier 2009 >500 Sarcelles marbrées *Marmaronetta angustirostris* on été observées sur les lacs d'Ounianga, au nord du Chad. Au cours d'une visite en décembre 2011, au moins 150 Sarcelles marbrées ont été recensées, ainsi que des Canards pilets *Anas acuta*, des Canards souchets *A. clypeata* et quatre Canards du Cap *A. capensis*. La mouche *Haloscatella dichaeta* a été identifée comme faisant partie de la nourriture des sarcelles.

Summary. In January 2009 >500 Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris* were observed on the Ounianga Lakes, northern Chad. During a further visit in December 2011 at least 150 Marbled Teal were recorded, as well as Northern Pintails *Anas acuta*, Northern Shovelers *A. clypeata* and four Cape Teal *A. capensis*. The fly species *Haloscatella dichaeta* was identified as part of the teal's diet.

In northern Chad, fairly deep, permanent desert lakes occur halfway between the Tibesti and Ennedi mountains. These are divided into two groups, *c.*40–50 km apart (19°03'N 20°29'E–18°54'N 20°55'E). The entire water surface of *c.*2,000 ha involves 18 lakes separated by sand deposited by the trade winds. The saline, hyper-saline and freshwater lake system is permanently fed by fossil groundwater inflow from the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer (Eggermont *et al.* 2008, Francus *et al.* 2013). In December 2010 the Ounianga Lakes were integrated into the Chad nature reserve system as a Natural Site, and in July 2012 the latter was included, with the surrounding area totalling 62,808 ha, in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. At present just 200–600 tourists visit the site annually.

In December 2008– January 2009, I took part in a three-week expedition to Ennedi. The itinerary included a visit to the oases and the Ounianga

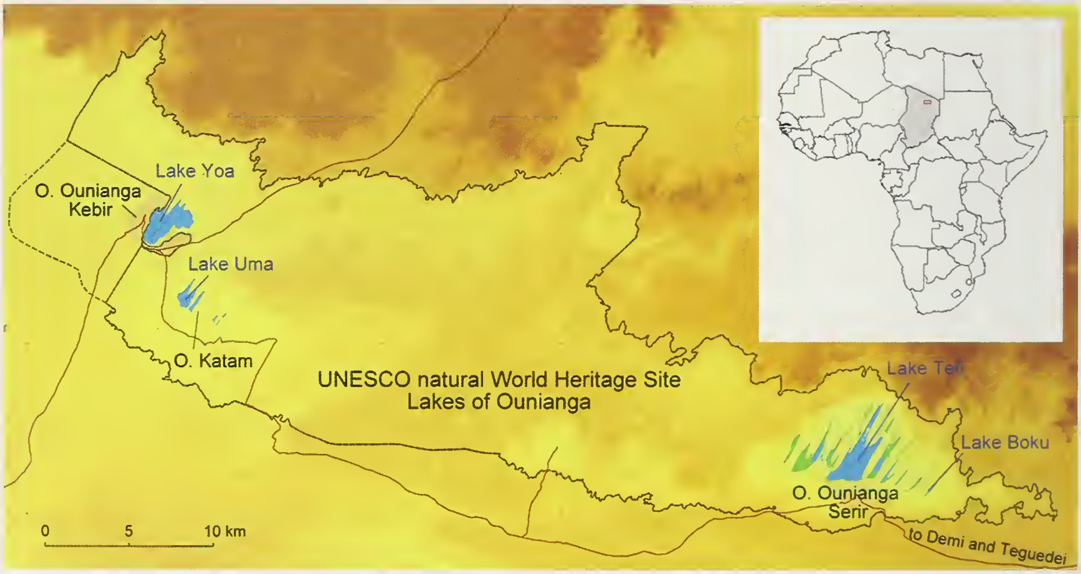

Figure 1. Map of the Lakes of Ounianga World Heritage Site (from whc.unesco.org/en/list/1400/documents/; accessed 1 December 2013)

Carte du Site du patrimoine mondial des lacs d'Ounianga (source: whc.unesco.org/en/list/1400/documents/ ; consultée le 1 décembre 2013)

Lakes north-west of the Mourdi Depression on 4–6 January; from east to west: freshwater Lake Boku (or Boko), the southern shore of hyper-saline Lake Teli (*c*.436 ha; near Oasis Ounianga Serir), saline Lake Uma (near Oasis Katam) and the southern edge of hyper-saline Lake Yoa (with its 358 ha and max. dimensions of 3.5 × 2.5 km, the second largest of the Ounianga Lakes, after Oasis Ounianga Kebir) (Fig. 1).

In November–December 2011, I again participated in a three-week expedition to northern Chad, this time focused on the Tibesti Mountains. On 1–2 December, the opportunity arose to make bird observations on the shores of the same lakes visited in 2009.

Observations

On 5–6 January 2009 a surprisingly large total of *c*.525 Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris* was observed on three of the lakes, including at least 165 on Lake Teli, >320 on Lake Yoa and 40 on Lake Uma. Due to time restraints, not all of the lakes in the complex were visited. Many of the teal close to the southern shore of Lake Teli were foraging on the water surface (presumably on invertebrates), turning jerkily and picking rapidly left and right like phalaropes. No other duck species were observed. In addition to a few passerines, just a few Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis*, an immature Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* and ubiquitous Brown-necked Ravens *Corvus ruficollis* were seen.

On 1 December 2011, many ducks were again present on Lake Yoa, as in 2009. Murky weather, gusty winds, waves and the long-distance views meant that I could only estimate the presence of at least 300 ducks. Most were Marbled Teal; the rest included Northern Pintails *Anas acuta* and Northern Shovelers *A. clypeata*. Due to the heavy swell, it was impossible to determine if any other species were present. A Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides* and at least 45 Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus himantopus* were seen near the opposite shore.

On nearby Lake Uma no ducks were seen and no remains of invertebrates were found on the shoreline. Two Cattle Egrets were foraging at a freshwater spring on the southern cliff. A water sample taken from the southern shore had a salt content of 51.1 g/l NaCl (i.e. 5.11% salt content with a pH value of 9.85).

Next day, I observed 23 Marbled Teal on Lake Teli, from one of the few vegetation-free points on the southern shore (Fig. 2): three relatively close by and 20 further away in a bay with *Phragmites australis* reedbeds. A water sample had a salt content of 56.9 g/l NaCl (i.e. 5.69% with a pH value of 9.82). No other ducks were visible. The outer fringe of the reedbeds could not be seen as the shore vegetation was too high and dense. Due to a strong north-easterly wind, no ducks could be seen away from the shoreline of Lake Teli, a large waterbody lacking any shelter. Probably only a small number of the birds present could be observed. In addition to the regularly observed White Wagtails *Motacilla alba*, Subalpine Warblers *Sylvia cantillans*, White-crowned Wheatears *Oenanthe leucopyga* and Brown-necked Ravens, two foraging Red-throated Pipits *Anthus cervinus* were seen on the shoreline on 2 December, as well as a fly-over Cattle Egret.

On the small, easternmost, freshwater Lake Boku, a Common Coot *Fulica atra* was seen. The lake is partially covered by mats of floating vegetation and mostly surrounded by tall *Phragmites australis* reedbeds. A water sample had a salt content of just 0.0296 g/l NaCl (i.e. 0.003% salt content with a pH value of 7.53). At the north-west end of the lake (Fig. 3) four Cape Teal *Anas capensis* swam into cover in the reeds. Subsequently, an adult was seen close to the shore in the north-west corner, but veered towards the centre of the lake when followed along the shoreline (Fig. 8), before flying back to the reeds. It repeated this three times. The ducks that had disappeared earlier into the reeds were not seen again before I left Lake Boku at *c*.14.00 hrs. I consider the behaviour of the adult Cape Teal as indicative of breeding.

Because I observed Marbled Teal surface-feeding, in a phalarope-like manner, on 5 January 2009, I collected the presumed food using a scoop net. I found numerous pupae and empty puparia on the shoreline. Many Diptera were present on the clumps of salty foam on the shore, and were identified subsequently from photographs as shore flies (Ephydridae). Apart from *Haloscatella dichaeta*, no other fly species was found in the samples. Ephydridae are known to be part of the broad food spectrum of Marbled Teal (Inigo *et al.* 2008). The developmental stages of this fly should, for at least some time, provide adequate

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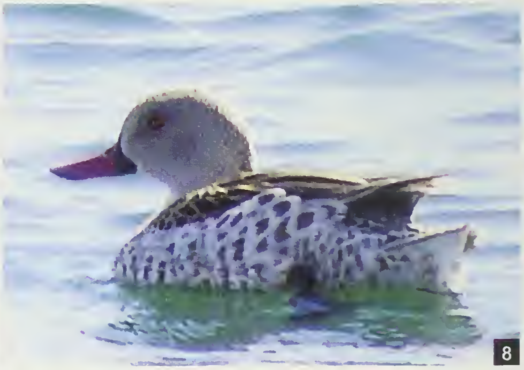
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Figure 2. Lake Boku, Chad, view from the south-east to north-west, 4 January 2009 (Robert Schönbrodt)

Lac Boku, Chad ; vue du sud-est au nord-ouest, 4 janvier 2009 (Robert Schönbrodt)

Figure 3. Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris* in front of the eastern cliffs of Lake Yoa, Chad, 5 January 2009 (Rudolf Sattler)

Sarcelles marbrées *Marmaronetta angustirostris* en face des falaises orientales du lac Yoa, Chad, 5 janvier 2009 (Rudolf Sattler)

Figure 4. Lake Uma, Katam, Chad, view from the southern shore towards the north-west, 5 January 2009 (Annegret Schönbrodt)

Lac Uma, Katam, Chad ; vue de la rive méridionale vers le nord-ouest, 5 janvier 2009 (Annegret Schönbrodt)

Figure 5. Lake Yoa, Ounianga Kebir, Chad, view from the raised south-west shore, towards the north-east, 1 December 2011 (Robert Schönbrodt)

Lac Yoa, Ounianga Kébir, Chad ; vue de la rive surélevée au sud-ouest vers le nord-est, 1 décembre 2011 (Robert Schönbrodt)

Figure 6. Lake Teli, Ounianga Serir, Chad, view from the southern shore towards the north-east, 2 December 2011 (Robert Schönbrodt)

Lac Téli, Ounianga Sérir, Chad ; vue de la rive méridionale vers le nord-est, 2 décembre 2011 (Robert Schönbrodt)

Figure 7. North-western shore of Lake Boku, Ounianga Serir, Chad, where Cape Teal *Anas capensis* were present, 2 December 2011 (Robert Schönbrodt)

Rive au nord-ouest du lac Boku, Ounianga Sérir, Chad, où le Canard du Cap *Anas capensis* était présent, 2 décembre 2011 (Robert Schönbrodt)

Figure 8. Cape Teal / Canard du Cap *Anas capensis*, Lake Boku, Chad, 2 December 2011 (Annegret Schönbrodt)

food for Marbled Teal at Ounianga Lakes. Huge numbers of insects occasionally occur in the area, as reported by Fuchs (1958), whose expedition reached the area in April 1954, and Willers (2005), who led a de-mining programme based at Oasis Ounianga Kebir for five months from September 2000.

Discussion

Marbled Teal is categorised as Vulnerable (BirdLife International 2000, 2008) and has a fragmented Palearctic range. Both the Mediterranean and south-west Asian breeding populations have contracted due to habitat loss. All efforts to protect the species are therefore important (Scott & Rose 1996). The western Mediterranean population comprises 3,000–5,000 individuals, the majority of them in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. Just 73–97 pairs breed in Spain with 2–3 pairs on Sicily (Inigo *et al.* 2008). Birds from the western Mediterranean population winter mainly in North Africa, where the species occasionally breeds. Many wintering areas north of the Sahara are well documented (see, e.g., Isenmann & Moali 2000, Isenmann *et al.* 2005, Metallaoui & Houhamdi 2008, Seddik *et al.* 2012, Bourass *et al.* 2013). Marbled Teal has also been recorded south of the Sahara, from Senegal through Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Cameroon and as far as Chad (Carboneras 1992, Green 1993, 1995, Scott & Rose 1996, Borrow & Demey 2004, Inigo *et al.* 2008).

For Chad, Scott & Rose (1996) mention only three key sites: Lake Chad (not annually, max. 45 in 1970), the Kanem Polder south of the Sahara (mean 35, max. 45 in 1970) and Lake Bagada north of the Ennedi Mountains at the southern edge of the Mourdi Depression (200 on a single occasion in 1962).

Dorst & Jouanin (1954) reported a Cape Teal and a Marbled Teal, both shot on a small lake (possibly Lake Boku) on 24 and 28 April 1954, respectively, by Colonel de Barmon, and did not exclude that one of these species resides year-round on the Ounianga Lakes and breeds there. This was repeated by Malbrant & Receveur (1955) and Dekeyser & Derivot (1968), without any new evidence.

The ethnologist Fuchs (1958), who reached Oasis Ounianga Kebir on 22 April1956, describes his arrival as follows: 'A cool breeze wafted up to us from the lake [Lake Yoa]. ... Flocks of plump wild ducks, herons ... took to flight as we approached them closely.' Unfortunately, he did not recount which duck species he saw (P. Fuchs pers. comm. 2009).

Two reports from Ennedi by Kollmannsperger (1959) are also of interest. On 1 September 1957 on a lake in Wadi Rei in the central Ennedi he observed *c.*100 ducks that were greyer and paler than the Garganey *Anas querquedula* he had shot. On 24 September 1957 at Lake Bagada, north of Ennedi, some ducks took flight when he approached. Unfortunately, he made no attempt to identify them. These locations are just 130 and 200 km distant from the Ounianga Lakes. Niethammer (1955) knew of further observations by Kollmannsperger in spring 1954: 'On individual waterbodies of the Oued Bougouro, which stretches east to west in the northern Ennedi, Kollmannsperger saw large groups of waders and ducks … gathered on the most northerly of the waters. The waders were undoubtedly mostly migrants from northern latitudes, and the ducks (e.g. Egyptian Geese [*Alopochen aegyptiacus*] and Cape Teals) African birds that had evidently wandered beyond their northern breeding boundary.' In retrospect these flocks could have included Marbled Teal.

Residents of the Ounianga Kebir oasis, whom I asked my driver to question about the ducks, reported that the latter remained year-round, but they were unable to give any information on species. I was unable to discover whether Marbled Teal is resident on the lake, despite showing local people enlarged images of the species made especially for the purpose. Some of those questioned claimed to have seen clutches of duck eggs.

The occurrence of significant numbers of Marbled Teal makes the Ounianga Lakes particularly important for this globally threatened species. It needs to be clarified whether Marbled Teal also occur at other times of the year.

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Sunbathing in Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus migrans parasitus*

Rob G. Bijlsma[a] *and Jan van der Kamp*[b,c]

Prise de bain de soleil chez le Milan à bec jaune *Milvus migrans parasitus*. Au Mali, le 24 novembre 2013, un Milan à bec jaune *Milvus migrans parasitus* se fit observer prenant un bain de soleil au milieu de la journée. L'oiseau faisait entièrement face à un fort soleil, en adoptant des postures ailes-déployées, ailes-delta et queue-en-éventail (12 minutes) ; ces postures furent interrompues par deux périodes de toilettage (deux et trois minutes chacune), avec symptômes d'hyperthermie (halètement, soulèvement des couvertures alaires et des plumes du croupion).

Summary. In Mali, an adult Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus migrans parasitus* was observed sunbathing in the middle of the day on 24 November 2013. The bird faced a fierce sun throughout, using spread-wing, delta-wing and tail-spread postures (12 minutes), with two intermittent preening bouts (two and three minutes each) during which it showed symptoms of hyperthermia (panting, lifting the wing-coverts and rump feathers).

In the Inner Niger Delta in Mali (15°18'62.88"N 04°08'166"W), on 24 November 2013 at 12.30 hrs, we checked a solitary *Faidherbia albida* for the presence of Palearctic warblers, part of a long-term study into the habitat choice of Eurasian passerines in their wintering areas in West Africa. The large tree, 16 m high and 28 m in diameter, contained four nests of a pair of Yellow-billed Kites *Milvus migrans parasitus*. The kites circled nearby without giving alarm calls; neither was moulting its flight feathers. The condition of the nests, combined with the behaviour of the kites, showed that breeding was not yet underway. Just after noon, one of the adults landed in the tree and perched for a short period near one of the nests. It then flew to a dead branch in the crown of the tree where it started preening, facing the sun. The weather was slightly overcast, but with bright sunshine, hardly any wind and a max. temperature of 32°C, like the previous days.

From our pirogue we had an excellent view of the kite at a distance of *c*.30 m. It was completely at ease in our presence, as is typical of the species in the Inner Niger Delta where it is commensal (Bijlsma *et al.* 2005). During a preening bout of two minutes, targeted at the mantle, lower back and primary and greater coverts, the bird fluffed out its greater wing-coverts and rump feathers, partially closed its eyes (lower eyelid lifted upwards) and opened the bill slightly (Fig. 1), suggestive of cooling behaviour in combination with feather care. It then spread its wings until a full spread-wing posture was attained, although the wings were not fully extended and 'locked' (Fig. 2), exposing the underside to the sun (but not in a position perpendicular to the plane of radiation). The tail remained closed. The kite most often faced the sun sideways, with the lower eyelids covering the eyes though not permanently, and rarely both at the same time. This posture was maintained for five minutes, after which the wings were gradually folded and another bout of preening commenced, again mainly focused on the mantle, lower back and wing-coverts (this time including underwing-coverts). During this episode, the bird showed signs of heat stress, the bill slightly opened and feathers of the head, rump

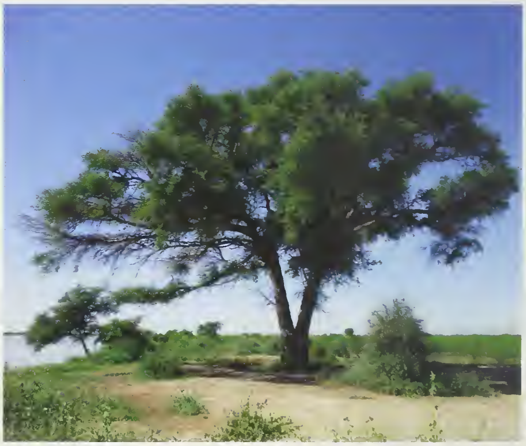
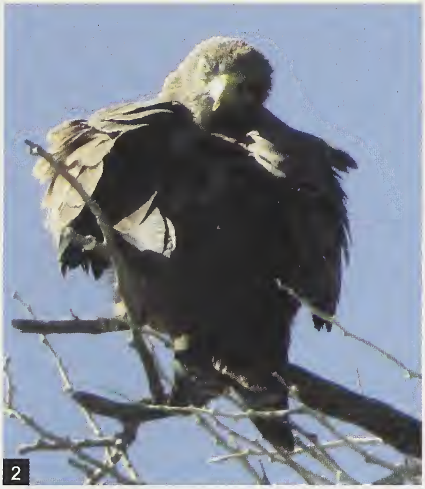


Figure 1. View of the *Faidherbia albida* along the Mayo Dembé, a tributary of the Niger River, where the Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus migrans parasitus* was recorded sunbathing, Mali, 24 November 2013 (Rob G. Bijlsma)

Le *Faidherbia albida* au bord du Mayo Dembé, un affluent du fleuve Niger, où le Milan à bec jaune *Milvus migrans parasitus* fut observé prenant un bain de soleil, Mali, 24 novembre 2013 (Rob G. Bijlsma)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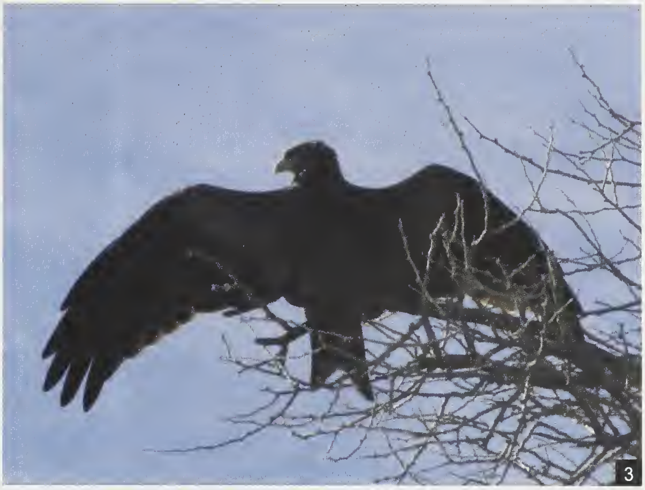
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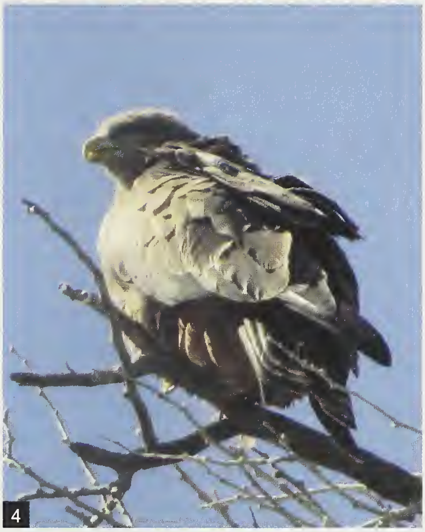
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Figure 2. Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus migrans parasitus* preening, with feathers fluffed out and eyes partially closed, Mali, 24 November 2013 (Jan van der Kamp)

Milan à bec jaune *Milvus migrans parasitus* faisant sa toilette, avec plumage ébouriffé et yeux mi-clos, Mali, 24 novembre 2013 (Jan van der Kamp)

Figure 3. Wing-spread posture of Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus migrans parasitus*, facing the sun, with tail and bill closed, Mali, 24 November 2013 (Jan van der Kamp)

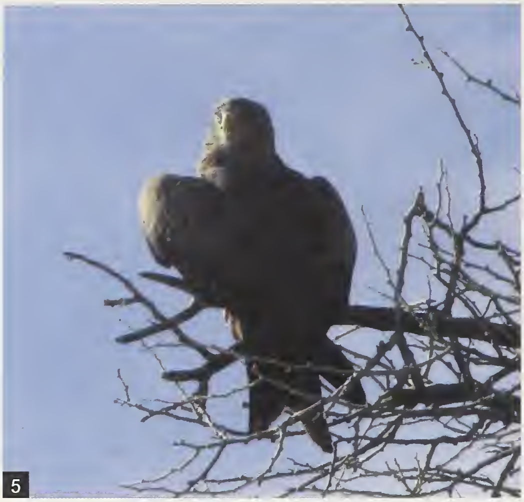
Pose ailes-déployées du Milan à bec jaune *Milvus migrans parasitus* faisant face au soleil, avec queue et bec fermés, Mali, 24 novembre 2013 (Jan van der Kamp)

Figure 4. Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus migrans parasitus* showing heat stress, i.e. panting, eyes half-closed, and fluffed mantle, wing-coverts and undertail-coverts, Mali, 24 November 2013 (Jan van der Kamp)

Milan à bec jaune *Milvus migrans parasitus* montrant un stress thermique : halètement, yeux mi-clos et manteau, couvertures alaires et sous-caudales ébouriffées, Mali, 24 novembre 2013 (Jan van der Kamp)

and upperwing-coverts being raised, apparently to permit cooling (Fig. 3). The second preening bout lasted three minutes, and was followed by sunning behaviour, first with a wing-spread posture, then in a delta-wing posture with eyes partially closed and occasional panting with half-open bill (Fig. 4). The latter posture graded into a sunning posture in which the tail alone was fanned (Fig. 5). Up to this point, the rectrices had remained closed whenever the bird was exposing its wings. The tail-fanning posture was accompanied by cooling behaviour, evident from the half-opened bill and from the feathers on the lower back that were lifted. In total, preening and sunning occupied 17 minutes, of which 12 minutes were spent in sunbathing postures, at a time of day when the sun was at or near its zenith.

Sunning is used here as defined by Simmons (1986: 1): behaviour in which a bird deliberately positions itself in the rays of the sun (electromagnetic radiation, solar radiation, solar energy, insolation), often adopting a special posture. This definition precludes drying after rain. Sunning behaviour is widespread among birds, and has been described for hundreds of species in tens of passerine and non-passerine families, in temperate, subtropical and tropical regions across the world (Kennedy 1969, Prinzinger 1983, Simmons 1986). Among raptors, sunning is common behaviour, although some species, like vultures (spread-wing and delta-wing; Houston 1980, Simmons 1983), Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* (spread-wing; Cade 1973) and European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* (delta-wing; Bijlsma 1997) appear to be more



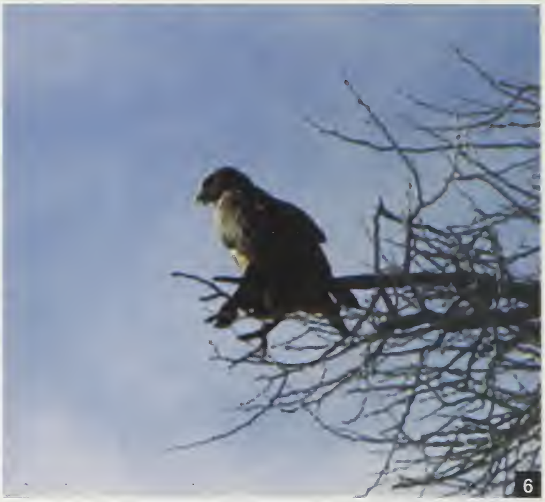


Figure 5. Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus migrans parasitus* in delta-wing posture, bill half-open and right eye closed, Mali, 24 November 2013 (Jan van der Kamp)

Milan à bec jaune *Milvus migrans parasitus* en posture ailes-delta, bec mi-ouvert et l'oeil droit fermé, Mali, 24 novembre 2013 (Jan van der Kamp)

Figure 6. Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus migrans parasitus* in tail-spread posture, simultaneously panting with mantle feathers lifted, Mali, 24 November 2013 (Jan van der Kamp)

Milan à bec jaune *Milvus migrans parasitus* montrant à la fois queue-en-éventail, halètement et plumes du dos gonflées, Mali, 24 novembre 2013 (Jan van der Kamp)

prone to engage in such behaviour than others (Cade 1982, Cade *in* Simmons 1986: 72, Bijlsma *et al.* 1999, Bijlsma 2001, Potters 2001). Despite having observed thousands of Yellow-billed Kites across Africa, mainly in November–March, this was our first observation of a bird sunning at a time of day when most raptors in Africa typically seek protection from the sun.

In line with Simmons (1986), sunning may be regarded as a subsidiary form of comfort behaviour and feather care. Circumstantial and some experimental evidence suggests that killing or exposing ectoparasites to removal by preening may be an important function of sunbathing (Moyer & Wagenbach 1995, Blem & Blem 2000, Saranathan & Burtt 2007). Most sunbathing occurs during the hottest part of the day or when the sun breaks through cloud cover, in temperate regions almost exclusively in summer (Simmons 1986). The birds use exposed sites and sometimes require cooling behaviour to prevent hyperthermia. Killing ectoparasites may increase fitness, but that does not explain why sunbathing is rarely observed in some raptors (e.g. Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*; Bijlsma 2001) and frequently in others (European Honey Buzzard; Bijlsma 1997). In Western Europe, the latter frequently starts sunning when conditions permit, almost always adopting a delta-wing posture (Bijlsma 1997). In a tame, but free-flying, juvenile in the Netherlands sunning was recorded in 13 bouts (but occurred more frequently) each of 100–900 seconds duration (mean 303 seconds, S.D. = 209) between 17 and 21 September 1997, when ambient temperatures were 17–24°C. This bird did most of its sunning between 09.00 and 12.00 hrs, and only when the sun was fierce. In contrast, sunning in Common Buzzards and Yellow-billed Kites has rarely been recorded, despite these species being widespread and common in Europe and Africa, respectively. Is there a difference in parasite load between species, and if so, is phyletic heritage involved, or geography, habitat use and feeding habits?

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First record of House Crow *Corvus splendens* for Madagascar—potential impacts and suggested management of an invasive bird species

Theo E. W. Linders and Olivier Langrand

Première mention du Corbeau familier *Corvus splendens* à Madagascar—impacts potentiels et proposition de gestion de cette espèce envahissante. Une population de 15 Corbeaux familiers *Corvus splendens* a été découverte début 2014 dans la ville côtière de Toamasina à Madagascar. Compte tenu du caractère invasif de cette espèce originaire de l'Asie du sud et de son impact négatif potentiel sur l'avifaune locale et en particulier sur les espèces endémiques de Madagascar, un examen des options de gestion de cette espèce est présenté pour inciter les autorités compétentes à éradiquer le Corbeau familier tant que sa population est encore réduite.

Summary. A population of 15 House Crows *Corvus splendens* was discovered in the coastal city Toamasina, Madagascar, at the start of 2014. Because of the invasive character of this southern Asian species and the potential negative impacts on the local avifauna, especially species endemic to Madagascar, a review of management options is provided to prompt the authorities to eradicate the House Crow while its population is still small.

House Crow *Corvus splendens*, which is native to Iran, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and Myanmar (Madge 2009), is listed as a species of Least Concern (BirdLife International 2014). It has extended its range throughout the Indian Ocean and beyond via deliberate introductions and ship-assisted colonisation. House Crows are now or have been established along most of Africa's east coast (from Kenya to South Africa), in the Middle East (Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen), on some western Indian Ocean islands (Mauritius, Seychelles), in South-East Asia (Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore) and even in Australia, Europe (Netherlands) and North America (USA: Florida) (Ryall 2002, Ottens & Ryall 2003, Pranty 2004, Mwinyi & Said 2009, Island Conservation 2012a). The species is strictly commensal and no populations are known to live independently of humans, even within its native range (Nyari *et al.* 2006). They have negative impacts on people through crop raiding (Mwinyi & Said 2009), excessive noise at roost sites (Yap & Sodhi 2004) and spreading of pathogens (Peh & Sodhi 2002).

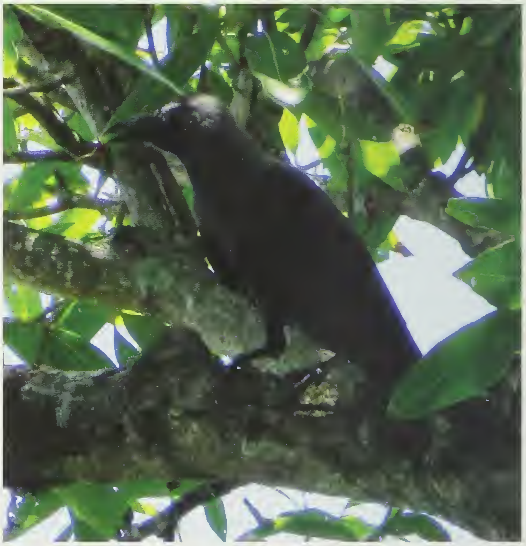

Figure 1. House Crow *Corvus splendens*, Toamasina, Madagascar, 2 January 2014 (Theo Linders). At least 15 were present the day the photograph was taken.

Corbeau familier *Corvus splendens*, Toamasina, Madagascar, 2 janvier 2014 (Theo Linders). Au moins 15 individus étaient présents à cette date.

House Crow is considered to be one of the world's most invasive bird species (GISD 2010) and has negative impacts on biodiversity including competition with native species (Yap & Sodhi 2004), predation and harassment of native birds (Ryall 1992). Control and eradication programmes have been undertaken in parts of their non-native range (Island Conservation 2012b), e.g. in Tanzania (Mwinyi & Said 2009), the Netherlands (Ottens & Ryall 2003; A. den Hartog pers. comm.), Mauritius (Feare

& Mungroo 1990; V. Tatayah pers. comm.), Singapore (Yap & Sodhi 2004), Australia (Nyari *et al.* 2006), Jordan (S. Jbour pers. comm.) and on Socotra, Yemen (Suleiman & Taleb 2010, Suleiman *et al.* 2011, Island Conservation 2012b). Methods used include poisoning with avicides, trapping and shooting (Feare & Mungroo 1990, Mwinyi & Said 2009, Suleiman & Taleb 2010, Suleiman *et al.* 2011)

Status in the Malagasy region

In the Malagasy region, House Crow is established in Mauritius and is sporadically recorded in Seychelles and on Réunion (Safford 2013, Sinclair & Langrand 2013). In Seychelles it became self-established on Mahé in the 1970s but was eradicated in 1994; since then singles have continued to arrive occasionally but have been shot by government authorities as soon as detected, where possible, and no permanent population has resulted (Skerrett & Bullock 2001, Ryall 2002, 2010; A. Skerrett pers. comm. *per* R. Safford). On Mauritius the species was first reported in 1900 (Cheke & Hume 2008) and is now widespread around settlements (Feare & Mungroo 1990). Control of the population has been taking place over the past ten years, but despite these efforts the population on Mauritius is increasing because of the availability of waste (V. Tatayah pers. comm.). On Réunion, sporadic appearances by a few individuals were reported in 2004 (Cheke 2008), 2006 (Safford 2013) and in 2010 and 2011 (SEOR 2010–11), but the birds have been subsequently destroyed (F.-X. Couzi pers. comm.). On Rodrigues two observed in 1995 were shot (Safford 2013). There are now no House Crows there (V. Tatayah pers. comm.) and the species has not been reported from the Comoros or Madagascar (Safford 2013, Sinclair & Langrand 2013).

First report of House Crow in Madagascar

Madagascar is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots (Mittermeier *et al.* 1999, 2004). Although the island supports relatively few breeding bird species compared to other large tropical islands, it is of exceptional ornithological importance, as more than half of the 220 breeding species are endemic to Madagascar (Sinclair & Langrand 2013). Fortunately, Madagascar has few introduced bird species, all of which are inked to human settlements and degraded natural ecosystems. These include Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*, which has reached invasive proportions, and House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (Sinclair & Langrand 2013).

The newest non-native bird species recorded on Madagascar is the House Crow. The first sighting was made on 1 January 2014, when two were observed by TL in Toamasina (Tamatave; 18°10'S 49°22'E) on the east coast. Further observations revealed the presence of at least 15 individuals, in a relatively small area. The birds roosted in trees on a private plot, bordered by the Rue de la Batterie and Rue Grandidier (18°15'S 49°41'E). The site is within 50 m of the beach and near the industrial harbour of Toamasina, the largest in Madagascar, which is unsurprising as the birds' arrival was almost certainly ship-assisted and they prefer roost sites near the sea (C. Ryall pers. comm.). The origin of the birds is unknown, but Mauritius and the East African coast are the nearest potential areas and have many commercial exchanges with Madagascar.

Potential impacts on the Malagasy native avifauna

Most endemic Malagasy birds are forest species and most occur only in primary forests and adjacent second growth (Langrand 1990). House Crows, on the other hand, are dependent on human settlements and therefore their negative impact on the Malagasy native avifauna will probably be limited. They are, however, crop pests elsewhere, and are known to attack small birds and take their eggs, compete with native species and destroy their nests and eggs (Yap & Sodhi 2004). In Toamasina, the commonest bird species are the invasive Common Myna and House Sparrow, and Rock (feral) Dove *Columba livia*. Native bird species, including most of the endemics, are scarcer, but include Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*, Madagascar Kestrel *Falco newtoni*, African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus gracilis*, Pied Crow *Corvus albus*, Madagascar Wagtail *Motacilla flaviventris*, Madagascar Crested Drongo *Dircurus forficatus*, Madagascar White-eye *Zosterops maderaspatana*, Souimanga Sunbird *Cinnyris souimanga*, Madagascar Green Sunbird *C. notatus* and Madagascar Red Fody *Foudia madagascariensis*. Observations from East Africa indicate that House Crows can have a significant negative impact on weavers and sunbirds (Ryall 1992, Mwinyi & Said 2009).

The risk of displacement of native bird species by House Crows in Toamasina exists through direct predation, competition for nest sites and food resources. In addition, this population could expand within Madagascar and to nearby islands.

Proposed management action

Considering the above-mentioned risks, we suggest that the authority responsible for biodiversity conservation in Madagascar considers eradicating all House Crows currently present in Toamasina. Eradication is still possible considering the small population and small home range.

Several methods could be used: netting, trapping or shooting. Considering that the crows are in a heavily populated urban environment, we would suggest using trapping or netting. Chemical products used to kill or stun the birds could also be employed provided that the baiting is performed in a fully controlled environment, as dead and dying birds can threaten public health especially children, poultry and household pets (Yap & Sodhi 2004, Mwinyi & Said 2009). One option would be to use DRC-1339, an avicide metabolised almost entirely by the time of death, thereby minimising secondary risks as corvids are highly susceptible to this product, which reduces the risk to non-target species. Carcasses could be collected from below their roost sites. Pre-baiting using non-toxic eggs could be used to assess non-target risks and ensure crows feed at particular sites on that food source (Coates *et al.* 2007). Shooting with appropriate firearms and ammunition from a camouflaged position has been used successfully (Suleiman *et al.* 2011).

The 2014 House Crow eradication project in Hoek van Holland, Netherlands, could be used as an example, as it dealt with a relatively small population of *c.*20 birds (Slaterus *et al.* 2009). Trapping and netting worked only initially as the crows easily learned to avoid the nets, while trapping was made difficult due to opposition by local inhabitants. The birds are being shot one by one (A. den Hartog pers. comm.). This underlines the necessity of engaging with all stakeholders prior to the operation, to work carefully and to use both active and passive methods.

Passive methods (e.g. toxic baiting) ideally would be used initially to target the population, as these do not impact the efficacy of other methods, which create wariness but could be used later in a campaign (e.g. shooting).

Successful eradications have proven to be difficult, long and costly operations (Suleiman & Taleb 2010) if the crow population is large (Yap & Sodhi 2003, Suleiman *et al.* 2011). Therefore it is advisable to eradicate this population while it is still small.

Conclusion

Madagascar has very few alien bird species, especially compared to other islands in the Malagasy region. Common Myna is the only true invasive alien bird species in Madagascar. House Crow has the potential to have major negative impacts on people and Madagascar's biodiversity, which is why, on the basis of experience in other countries (Yap & Sodhi 2004, Suleiman *et al.* 2011), we recommend that the small population at Toamasina be eradicated as swiftly as possible, under the strict control of the Malagasy agency responsible for the environment.

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Macaroni Penguin *Eudyptes chrysolophus* moulting on Gough Island, South Atlantic

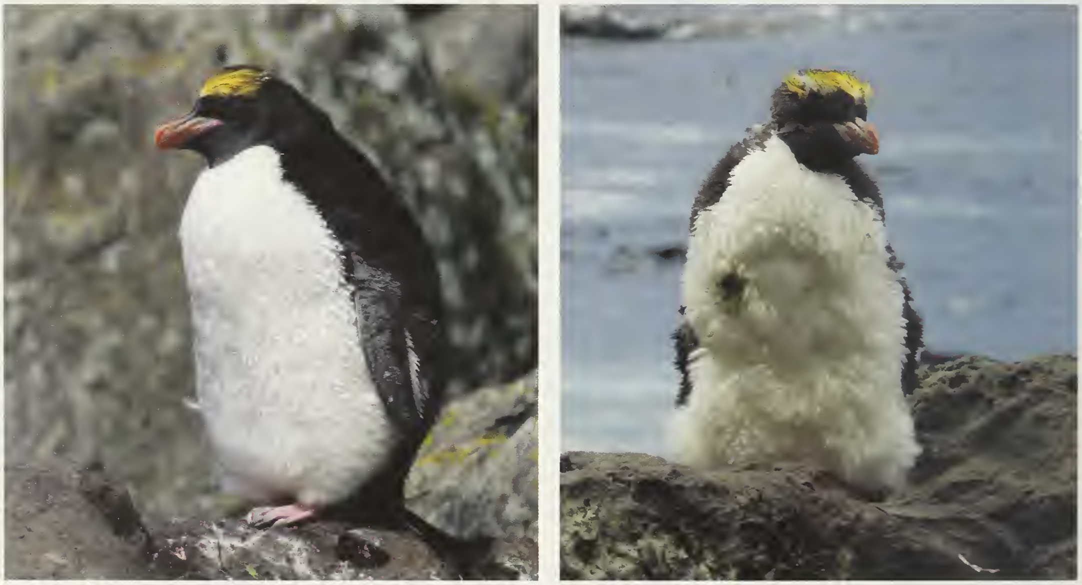
Mara A. Nydegger and Chris W. Bell

Un Gorfou doré *Eudyptes chrysolophus* en mue à l'île Gough, Atlantique Sud. Un Gorfou doré *Eudyptes chrysolophus* en mue a été photographié à l'île Gough, Atlantique Sud, le 28 février 2013. Il a été observé pour la dernière fois le 9 mars, quand il avait complété environ deux tiers de sa mue. Le Gorfou doré est un visiteur assez rare de l'archipel de Tristan da Cunha, situé plus au nord à 37°S, mais il n'y a qu'une donnée antérieure pour Gough, de mars 1993.

On 28 February 2013 a Macaroni Penguin *Eudyptes chrysolophus* was observed at Seal Beach, Gough Island, in the central South Atlantic (40°S 10°W). The bird's short crest suggests that it was a subadult. It was loafing 25 m from a breeding colony of Northern Rockhopper Penguins *E. moseleyi*. From the appearance of the bird's feathers, it was apparently beginning to moult (Fig. 1). The bird was observed again at the same spot on 5 March, by which time it was in heavy moult (Fig. 2), and for the last time on 9 March, when its moult was approximately two-thirds completed. No further visits were made to Seal Beach until 31 March, on which date there was no sign of the bird.

The only previous record of a Macaroni Penguin on Gough dates from March 1993, also at Seal Beach (Hänel *et al.* 2005), but the species is a scarce visitor to the Tristan da Cunha archipelago, further north at 37°S (Ryan 2007). The Norwegian Scientific Expedition to Tristan da Cunha recorded a moulting Macaroni Penguin among Northern Rockhopper Penguins at Blenden Hall, Inaccessible Island, on 3 March 1938 (Hagen 1952) and were informed by their local guides that Macaroni Penguins, which they called 'King Penguins', came ashore occasionally on both Inaccessible and Nightingale.

Macaroni Penguin breeds on islands close to the Antarctic Convergence throughout the South



Figures 1–2. Mararoni Penguin *Eudyptes chrysolophus*, Gough Island, South Atlantic, at the onset of moult, 28 February 2013 (left) and in advanced moult, 5 March 2013 (Mara Nydegger)

Gorfou doré *Eudyptes chrysolophus* commençant sa mue, île Gough, Atlantique Sud, 28 février 2013 (à gauche) et en mue avancée, 5 mars 2013 (Mara Nydegger)

Atlantic and southern Indian Oceans (Marchant & Higgins 1990). Those breeding colonies nearest to Gough are on Bouvetøya and South Georgia (Marchant & Higgins 1990), *c.*1,800 km and 2,500 km distant, respectively. The species regularly disperses up to 2,000 km during the post-breeding period, although usually with more longitudinal than latitudinal movement (Bost *et al.* 2009). Vagrants have been recorded in New Zealand and Australia (Marchant & Higgins 1990), South Africa (Hockey *et al.* 2005) and as far south as 67°S, on Avian Island, Antarctic Peninsula (Gorman *et al.* 2009). Non-breeders and failed breeders return to their colonies to moult in January–February, whereas breeders return later in March to moult (Williams & Croxall 1991). Many records of vagrant penguins are of birds forced ashore to moult (Hockey *et al.* 2005) and the Macaroni Penguin we observed was probably one of these cases.

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Correction to Anderson (2010): First records of eight bird species for Eritrea (*Bull. ABC* 17: 66–70)

Jason Anderson

Rectification de Anderson (2010) : Première mention de huit espèces d'oiseaux pour l'Éritrée (*Bull. ABC* 17: 66–70). Anderson (2010) présentait ses observations de l'Érismature maccoa *Oxyura maccoa* en 2008–09 comme les premières pour le pays. L'espèce avait toutefois déjà été observée par Kasparek (1998) et Zinner (2001).

In Anderson (2010), I claimed the first records for Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa* in Eritrea based on seven sightings of birds on reservoirs in the highlands between April 2008 and February

2009. I speculated that the species is a recent colonist following the construction of reservoirs in the country. It has since been brought to my attention that I overlooked two previous mentions of the presence of Maccoa Duck in Eritrea, firstly by Kasparek (1998) and subsequently by Zinner (2001).

Kasparek (1998) in his brief note did not provide date(s), location(s) or number(s) of birds seen, or indeed any details of his sighting(s). Zinner (2001), however, mentioned two sight records of single males in June 1999 and February 2000 at an unspecified site on the 'Central Plateau' (i.e. highlands) at 2,200–2,400 m. It is probable that both records were on reservoirs; there are very few natural freshwater lakes in the Eritrean highlands.

Prior to publication, I had consulted Smith (1957), Dowsett (1993) and Ash & Atkins (2009), none of whom listed previous records of the species in Eritrea, despite the fact that Ash & Atkins included both Kasparek and Zinner in their references. They may have overlooked these records or rejected them due to inadequate documentation. They mentioned only my five records from 2008, which were submitted shortly before publication of their atlas, but mistakenly stated '2–8 birds between Feb and Oct'. In fact the five records submitted were of 1–8 birds between April and September, as in Anderson (2010).

Ash & Atkins (2009) mentioned that the species had been recently discovered in the northern Ethiopian province of Tigray by L. J. Dijksen. This provides further evidence of its range expansion northwards. Breeding has been recorded in the north of the species' range in all months (Berruti *et al.* 2005, 2007, cited in BirdLife International 2014); however, due to the lack of suitable vegetation for nesting at recently dammed reservoirs, it is unlikely that the species has yet bred in Eritrea. Maccoa Duck is listed as Near Threatened by BirdLife International (2014), due to severe declines, up to 50% in the last ten years, making this northern extension of its range of potential significance for the species' conservation.

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Immature Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* in Senegal in February 2005

Jos A. Vroege

Un Vautour moine *Aegypius monachus* immature au Sénégal en février 2005. Le 23 février 2005, un Vautour moine *Aegypius monachus* immature a été photographié entre Touba et Louga, Sénégal, parmi un grand groupe de vautours comprenant quelques Vautours fauves *Gyps fulvus*. Il s'agissait probablement d'un oiseau provenant du sud-ouest de l'Europe. Au Sénégal, cette espèce a été rapportée également en janvier 2005 et le 13 février 2007.

Between 18 February and 4 March 2005, I visited The Gambia, Senegal and southern Mauritania with a group of Dutch birders. On 23 February we drove from Kaolack to St. Louis, in Senegal, along which road we noticed quite a number of dead livestock, occasionally attended by groups of vultures. Apart from Hooded *Necrosyrtes monachus*, White-backed *Gyps africanus*, Rüppell's *G. rueppelli* and Lappet-faced Vultures *Torgos tracheliotos*, we also observed several Eurasian Griffon Vultures *Gyps fulvus* (Fig. 1); the latter are uncommon Palearctic visitors to Senegal (Barlow *et al.* 1999).

Between Touba and Louga, we noted an immature Cinereous (=Eurasian Black) Vulture *Aegypius monachus* among a large group of vultures at the carcass of a horse (Fig. 2). We immediately realised this was a remarkable observation, as Barlow *et al.* (1999) do not include this species and the only other field guide we had with us, Sinclair & Ryan (2003), only briefly mention Cinereous Vulture as a confusion species under Lappet-faced Vulture and as a Palearctic vagrant to the north of sub-Saharan Africa.

An immature Cinereous Vulture, photographed at Nianing near M'bour, south-east of Dakar, on 13 February 2007, was published previously as the first for Senegal (Talamelli 2007), but there is another record mentioned by Isenmann *et al.* (2010) involving a nestling that was ringed in Spain in 2004 and recovered in northern Senegal in January 2005. Thus, there are now three records for the country, of which ours is chronologically the second.

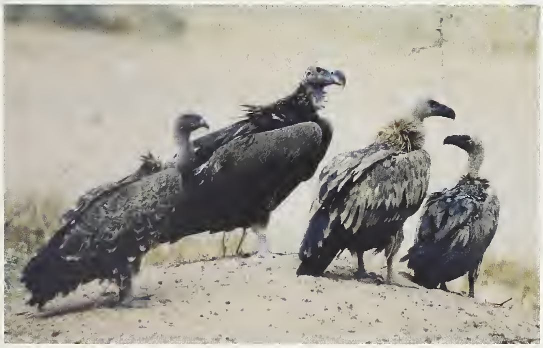

Figure 1. Eurasian Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* (third from left) with, from left to right, Rüppell's Vulture *G. rueppelli*, Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos* and White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*, between Touba and Louga, Senegal, 23 February 2005 (Klaas de Vet)

Vautour fauve *Gyps fulvus* (troisième de gauche) avec, de gauche á droite, un Vautour de Rüppell *G. rueppelli*, un Vautour oricou *Torgos tracheliotos* et un Vautour africain *Gyps africanus*, entre Touba et Louga, Sénégal, 23 février 2005 (Klaas de Vet)

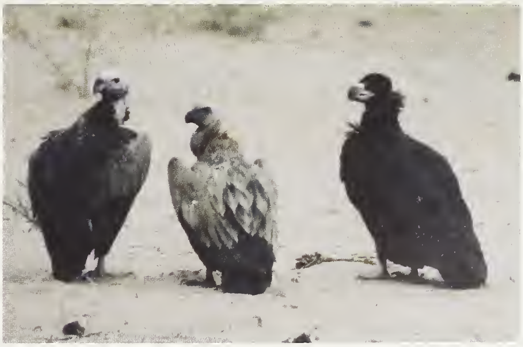

Figure 2. Immature Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* (right) with White-backed Vulture *Gyps fulvus* (middle) and Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos* (left), between Touba and Louga, Senegal, 23 February 2005 (Klaas de Vet)

Vautour moine *Aegypius monachus* immature (à droite) avec un Vautour africain *Gyps fulvus* (au milieu) et un Vautour oricou *Torgos tracheliotos* (à gauche), entre Touba et Louga, Sénégal, 23 février 2005 (Klaas de Vet)

The birds observed in February 2005 and February 2007, like that in January 2005, presumably came from south-west Europe, perhaps having joined groups of immature Eurasian Griffon Vultures that crossed the Strait of Gibraltar. Cinereous Vulture is an accidental visitor to Morocco, with a few records in Algeria and Tunisia (Isenmann & Moali 2000, Thévenot *et al.* 2003, Isenmann *et al.* 2005). A Cinereous Vulture ringed in Spain in November 1994 was found dead in Mali in February 1995 (Talamelli 2007).

Acknowledgements

This record was previously mentioned in an article in *De Takkeling*, the journal of the Dutch Raptor Working group (Vroege 2013). Thanks to Rob Bijlsma, Eduard Opperman and Maarten Verrips for their comments, to Ron Demey and Guy Kirwan for reviewing this note, and to Klaas de Vet for his permission to digitise his photographs and use them here.

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First records of Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Calidris subruficollis* and Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* for Madagascar

Cuan Rush and David Hoddinott

Premières observations du Bécasseau roussâtre *Calidris subruficollis* et du Phalarope à bec étroit *Phalaropus lobatus* à Madagascar. Un Bécasseau roussâtre *Calidris subruficollis* et un Phalarope à bec étroit *Phalaropus lobatus* ont été photographiés le 1 et 20 octobre 2012, respectivement, entre Toliara et Ifaty, au sud-ouest de Madagascar. Ce sont les premières données pour le pays de ces espèces, qui nichent dans la région arctique.

On 1 October 2012, at *c*.09.00 hrs, a Rockjumper birding tour group led by CR was birding at a wetland between Toliara and Ifaty, in south-west Madagascar, when an interesting shorebird was seen foraging in a grassy patch. It superficially resembled a small Ruff *Calidris* (=*Philomachus*) *pugnax*, but it had a shorter, straight black bill, a dark beady eye surrounded by a pale ring within an otherwise plain face, finely spotted breast-sides and yellow legs. Based on these features, the bird was identified as a Buff-breasted Sandpiper *C.* (=*Tryngites*) *subruficollis*. Some photographs were taken, one of which is reproduced here (Fig. 1). The bird continued to

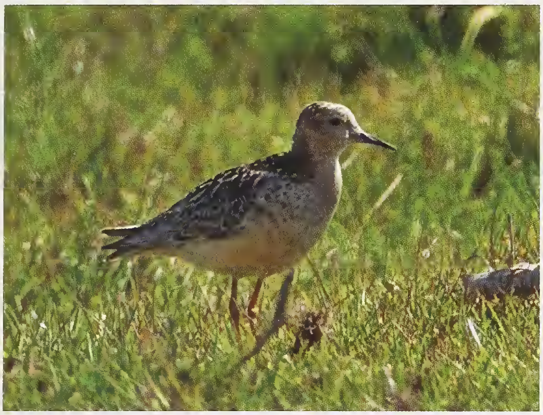

Figure 1. Buff-breasted Sandpiper / Bécasseau roussâtre *Calidris subruficollis*, between Toliara and Ifaty, Madagascar, 1 October 2012 (Lee Hunter)

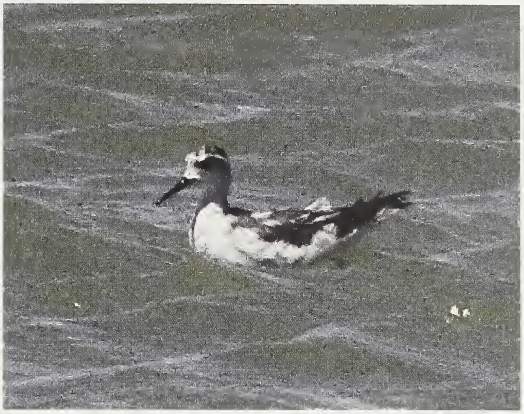

Figure 2. Red-necked Phalarope / Phalarope à bec étroit *Phalaropus lobatus*, between Toliara and Ifaty, Madagascar, 28 October 2012 (David Hoddinott)

feed for *c.*15 minutes, during which close-range views were enjoyed by the group, before it flew away.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper breeds in the high Arctic of America and eastern Siberia, and winters mainly in southern South America (van Gils & Wiersma 1996). In sub-Saharan Africa, there are scattered records of vagrants in Senegal, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Benin, Burundi, Kenya, Namibia and South Africa (Borrow & Demey 2001, Stevenson & Fanshawe 2002, Hockey *et al.* 2005). In the western Indian Ocean, it has been recorded in Seychelles, with six records on five different islands in November–January and in March (Safford & Hawkins 2013).

On 28 October 2012, at *c.*15.00 hrs on a clear afternoon, another Rockjumper group comprising eight participants and DH (the guide) were birding at an extensive wetland along the same road, halfway between Toliara and Ifaty, when they spotted a phalarope swimming on the open water *c.*40 m away. On closer examination it was identified as a Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* in non-breeding plumage, a species DH is familiar with from South Africa, Namibia and Ghana. It had a distinct eye patch, a dark grey back streaked white, and a fairly long, slender, all-black bill without a yellow base, thus eliminating Red (Grey) Phalarope *P. fulicarius.* Its small size, prominent eye patch and a bill that was insufficiently long or slender, eliminated Wilson's Phalarope *Steganopus tricolor.* Several photographs were taken (Fig. 2). The bird continued feeding in typical phalarope fashion, spinning around regularly and picking food from the water's surface, for the entire half-hour we were in the area.

Red-necked Phalarope breeds in the Arctic and spends the non-breeding season at sea, mainly off western South America, in the Arabian Sea and from Indonesia to western Melanesia (van Gils & Wiersma 1996). In sub-Saharan Africa, it is locally common off Somalia (Ash & Miskell 1998) and fairly common off Kenya, as well as being irregular inland on Rift Valley lakes north to Ethiopia (Stevenson & Fanshawe 2002, Ash & Atkins 2009). Along Africa's east coast and in the western Indian Ocean, vagrants have twice been recorded in Seychelles, both in November (Safford & Hawkins 2013), as well as south to KwaZuluNatal, South Africa (Hockey *et al.* 2005).

These are the first documented records of Buff-breasted Sandpiper and Red-necked Phalarope for Madagascar. They are not mentioned in the latest ABC checklist (Dowsett *et al.* 2013) or in Safford & Hawkins (2013).

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First record of Audouin's Gull *Ichthyaetus audouinii* for Ghana

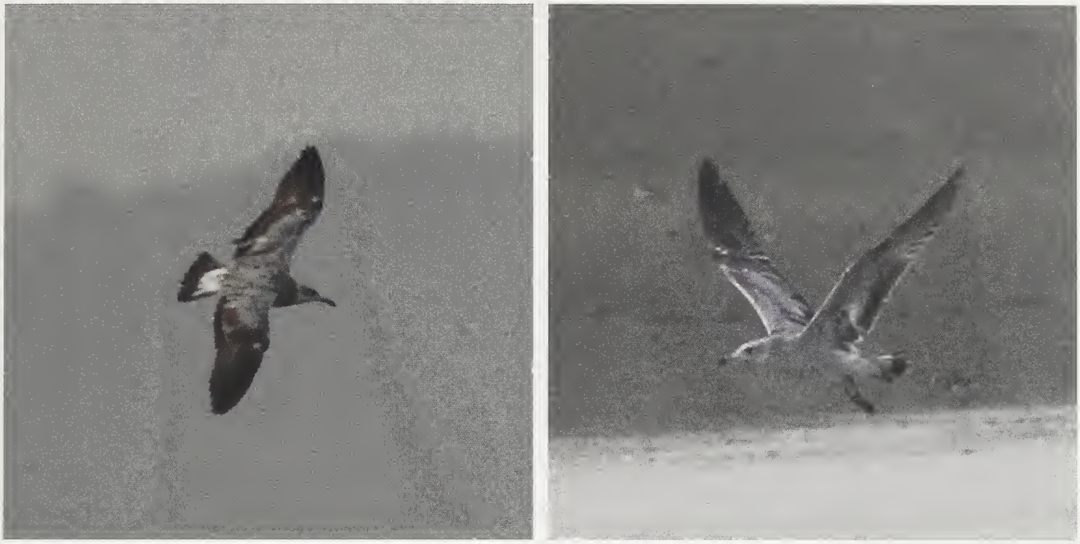
Aidan G. Kelly[a], Richard H. Coombes[b], Dermot O'Mahony[c] and Brian Porter[d]

Première observation du Goéland d'Audouin *Ichthyaetus audouinii* au Ghana. Un Goéland d'Audouin *Ichthyaetus audouinii* de premier hiver a été photographié à Muni Lagoon, à l'ouest de Winneba, Ghana, le 13 Janvier 2014. C'est la première donnée de cette espèce au sud de la Sénégambie.

On 13 January 2014, at *c.*17.00 hrs, at the southern end of Muni Lagoon, west of Winneba, Ghana, together with our local guide Kalu Afasi of Malimbe Tours, we were scanning the wetland, part of the Muni-Pomadze Ramsar site, with telescopes. AGK noted a medium- to large-sized gull with a large flock of Royal *Thalasseus maximus* and Sandwich Terns *T. sandvicensis c.*400–500 m away. We concluded that it was a first-winter (second calendar-year) Audouin's Gull *Ichthyaetus audouinii.* Given that Borrow & Demey (2010) stated that the only similar-sized gull known to occur in Ghana was Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus,* it was clear that we needed to obtain closer views and, if possible, photographic documentation. The bird eventually took flight with some of the terns and began flying around the lagoon. It occasionally came a little closer to us enabling AGK & RHC to take photographs, of which two are reproduced here (Figs. 1–2). However, as we had to return to Accra, we then had to leave the site.

Description

Medium-sized gull, with a distinctly long, pear-shaped head and a relatively long drooping bill, giving the bird a 'snouty' appearance. The bill was greyish with a dark tip, further adding to the long-bodied appearance. Very obvious were the longish legs, which appeared dark blackish grey. The pale grey mantle and relatively small size immediately eliminated Lesser Black-backed Gull, which is the only regularly occurring large gull in Ghana. In flight the bird appeared relatively long- and narrow-winged compared to Lesser Black-backed Gull. At times it recalled a very large Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus* in appearance and structure. Head and breast whitish with brown mottling on the ear-coverts and upper breast, extending to the belly. In flight the upperparts were quite contrasting due to an overall mid-grey mantle, lesser and marginal wing-coverts, although these tracts were still heavily peppered with brown juvenile feathers. Primaries, primary-coverts, secondaries and most of the greater coverts were dark uniform brownish,



Figures 1–2. First-winter Audouin's Gull *Ichthyaetus audouinii*, Muni Lagoon, west of Winneba, Ghana, 13 January 2014 (Aidan G. Kelly)

Goéland d'Audouin *Ichthyaetus audouinii* de premier hiver, Muni Lagoon, près de Winneba, Ghana, 13 janvier 2014 (Aidan G. Kelly)

contrasting strongly with the greyish mantle and lesser coverts. The bird had a very obvious dark tail band contrasting strongly with the clean white rump and uppertail-coverts. The underwings were quite dark and heavily mottled.

We were reasonably confident of our identification, but this being such a significant record, AGK sent some of the photographs to K. Mullarney, who commented as follows: "I fully concur with AGK *et al.*'s identification of the Muni Lagoon gull as a second calendar-year Audouin's Gull, in a transition plumage that is typical of first-winter birds at this time of year. With no other gulls alongside for comparison it is perhaps not so easy to gauge the bird's size as it might be otherwise, but the distinctive head and bill, noted by the observers as reminiscent of an oversized first-year Mediterranean Gull, are highly characteristic of immature Audouin's. The strong contrast in the underwing pattern, with prominent pale greater covert band against solidly dark secondaries, and the mostly dark uppertail pattern contrasting with an essentially unmarked white rump are also indicative of Audouin's. In one or two of the photographs it is possible to make out the two-tone pattern of the uppertail, the basal half / two-thirds of the outer webs being a distinctly lighter shade than the broad terminal band, the uniformity being broken by one or two white inner webs revealed when the tail is spread. In this respect the tail pattern of first-year Audouin's is more similar to first-year Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* or Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla* than to other large gulls. The smooth or slightly mottled brownish-grey wash on the chest and flanks and unmarked white belly, vent and undertail-coverts is not seen in any of the larger gulls with which first-year Audouin's could be confused. While essentially in juvenile plumage, the Muni Lagoon Audouin's has replaced most of its mantle, scapulars and inner wing-coverts with adult-type light grey feathers. This corresponds with the more rapid acquisition of an adult-like appearance in Audouin's than in most of the other large gulls."

Audouin's Gull breeds locally around the Mediterranean Sea and is classified as Near Threatened (BirdLife International 2014). Its global population has increased from <1,000 pairs in 1966 to >20,000 pairs in 2000 (Olsen & Larsson 2004). This is thought to be due to the availability of effectively protected breeding areas since the 1980s, and also to the increase of discarded fish from trawlers, particularly around the Ebro Delta (Guitiérrez & Guinart 2008, BirdLife International 2014). In winter the species is more widespread around the Mediterranean Basin and also winters commonly in north-west Africa, with 2% of the population wintering in Senegambia (Olsen & Larsson 2004). The record reported here appears to be the first south of The Gambia (Olsen & Larsson 2004; R. J. Dowsett *in litt.* 2014).

Acknowledgements

We thank Killian Mullarney for commenting on our photographs and this note.

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First record of Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* for southern Africa, in Namibia

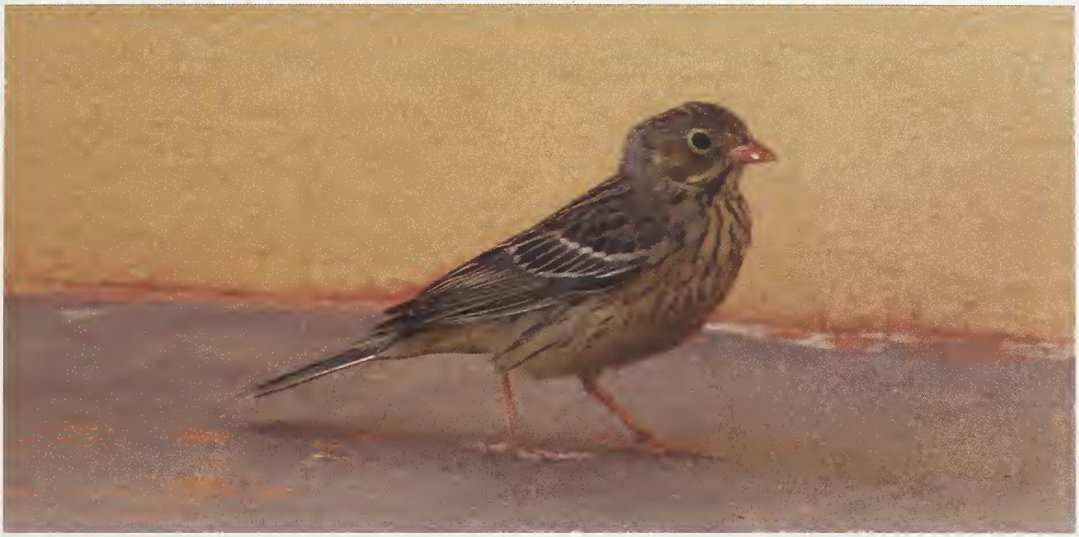
Paul F. Donald

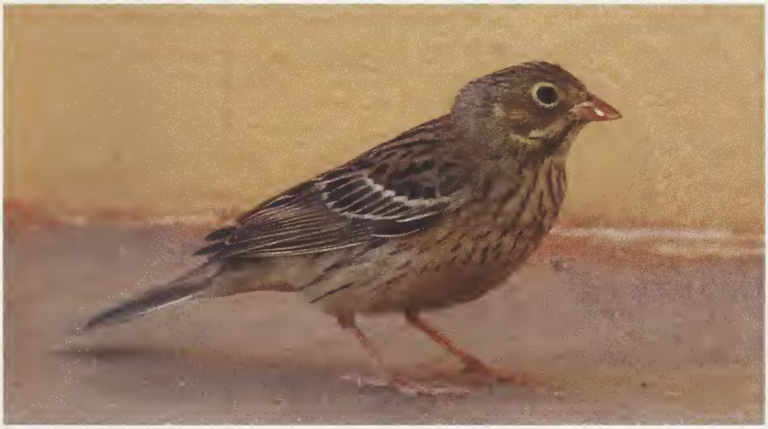
Première observation du Bruant ortolan *Emberiza hortulana* en Afrique australe. Un Bruant ortolan *Emberiza hortulana* de premier hiver, probablement une femelle, a été photographié dans la NamibRand Nature Reserve, Namibie centrale, le 13 novembre 2013. C'est la première observation pour l'Afrique australe, faite à environ 2.500 km au sud de la donnée précédente la plus méridionale.

On 13 November 2013 at 09.20 hrs, an Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* alighted on the verandah of the NamibRand Family Hideout in NamibRand Nature Reserve, central Namibia (25°17'13.2"S 16°04'04.8"E). It was present for *c.*10 seconds in the shade of the low wall surrounding the verandah, during which time I secured two photographs (Figs. 1–2), before it took off, giving a single mellow *chew* call in flight. It appeared to land in the short dry grass just beyond the property's low boundary wall, *c.*10 m away, but I was unable to relocate it that day or the next. It may have been attracted by food I had put out for Sociable Weavers *Philetairus socius* and Scaly-feathered Finches *Sporopipes squamifrons*, but was not seen to associate with these and was some metres from where they were feeding.

Identification

Although I was unable to take field notes of the bird's plumage during its very brief appearance, the photographs clearly show a number of distinctive features. Most striking are the prominent and distinctly yellowish submoustachial stripe and throat, contrasting with the blackish malar stripe, the numerous sharply demarcated blackish streaks on the breast and flanks, the broad pale tips to the lesser and greater covers forming two prominent white wingbars, the whitish eye-ring and the conical pinkish bill. The heavily





Figures 1–2. First-winter Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*, NamibRand Family Hideout, NamibRand Nature Reserve, Namibia, 13 November 2013 (Paul F. Donald)

Bruant ortolan *Emberiza hortulana* de premier hiver, NamibRand Family Hideout, NamibRand Nature Reserve, Namibie, 13 novembre 2013 (Paul F. Donald)

streaked breast and flanks eliminate all of the resident southern African buntings, and the prominent submoustachial and malar stripes, and eye-ring, clearly place the bird in the species group comprising Ortolan, Cretzschmar's *E. caesia*, Cinereous *E. cineracea* and Grey-necked Buntings *E. buchanani* (Byers *et al.* 1995, Madge 2011). Moreover, the heavily streaked breast and flanks, and prominent whitish wingbars identify it as an immature of one of these species. The pink bill and prominent blackish malar stripe exclude Cinereous Bunting, which has a grey bill and lacks a prominent malar at all ages, while the heavily streaked underparts and yellowish throat also exclude Grey-necked Bunting, which is virtually uniform below (Byers *et al.* 1995). Separation of immature Ortolan and Cretzschmar's Buntings is often problematic, but the distinctly yellow, rather than buff or orange, submoustachial stripe and throat contrasting with a prominent blackish malar stripe, the whitish, rather than buffy, wingbars and the extensive and clearly demarcated blackish breast and flank streaks all indicate an immature Ortolan Bunting (Byers *et al.* 1995). Unlike most buntings, juvenile Ortolans moult into a first-winter plumage that is distinctive from later plumages (Byers *et al.* 1995). The reduced streaking on the upperparts, the extensively streaked flanks and the fairly fresh appearance to the wing-coverts all indicate a first-winter bird yet to commence partial moult, which is usually initiated on arrival in the wintering grounds, and which leads to the more adult-like first-summer plumage. Although there is much individual variation and the sexes cannot be reliably separated in the field, the heavy flank streaks are suggestive of a female (Byers *et al.* 1995). On photographic evidence, this was therefore a recently moulted first-winter, probably female, Ortolan Bunting. This is a poorly known and rarely photographed plumage in Africa.

Recordings on xeno-canto, such as that by V. Arnold (http://www.xeno-canto.org/139755), suggest that the single call heard was at the lower end of the pitch of, but well within, the wide range of calls given by this species on migration.

Distribution in Africa

This is the first record of Ortolan Bunting in southern Africa, and indeed one of very few records south of the equator. Although the species' non-breeding range in Africa is poorly known, the distribution of recent records suggests that it inhabits a fairly narrow zone (07–10°N) of sub-Saharan Sahel and Guinea savanna between Senegambia in the west and Ethiopia and Eritrea in the east, with possible wintering populations in Oman and Yemen (Bairlein *et al.* 2009). No large non-breeding aggregations are known, and it appears that the species is thinly distributed across this wide longitudinal range, with most wintering birds recorded in upland areas. Sub-equatorial records include several records from the Ngulia Hills (Tsavo) and Taita Hills, in southern Kenya just south of the equator, four records from Seychelles and a single poorly documented record from Goma, north-eastern DR Congo (*c.*01°06'S) (Fry & Keith 2004, Bairlein *et al.* 2009, Safford & Hawkins 2013). The Namibian record was therefore *c.*24 degrees of latitude, or *c.*2,500 km, south of the previous southernmost record, and an extraordinary instance of vagrancy. The species' appearance in southern Africa appears particularly surprising given that its breeding population in Europe is at an all-time low following decades of severe decline (Bairlein *et al.* 2009). However, the date of the record and the fact that the bird was in first-winter plumage are both consistent with natural vagrancy. The species' appearance on Seychelles indicates that migrants are capable of sustained non-stop flight that could carry them over natural barriers or large expanses of unsuitable habitat. Furthermore, the remoteness of the location, the very low number of aviculturists in the region and the distance from the nearest major port all make it highly unlikely that the bird escaped from a collection or initially arrived in southern Africa on board a ship.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Jason Anderson, Clive Barlow, Joost Brouwer, Zephné Bernitz, Svein Dale, Trevor Hardaker, Frédéric Jiguet, Chege wa Kariuki, Houssein Rayaleh, Bruno Walther and Malcolm Wilson for their responses to my request for information on the bird's identity and on the distribution of Ortolan Buntings in Africa. Thanks to Titus Nangolo and Mandy Bruckner for their hospitality at NamibRand and to Fiona Roberts for her patience.

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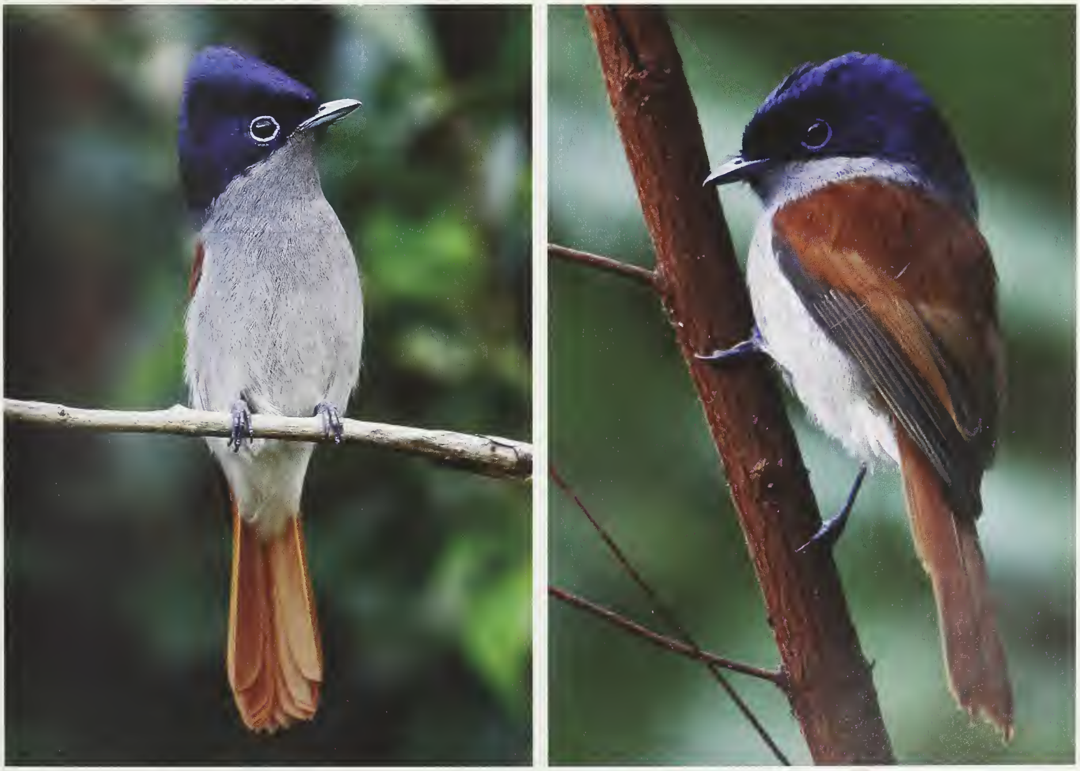
Photospot:

Aberrant Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone bourbonnensis* in Mauritius

Johannes H. Fischer and Anna-Selma van der Kaaden

Observation d'un Tchitrec des Mascareignes *Terpsiphone bourbonnensis* au plumage aberrant. Le Tchitrec des Mascareignes *Terpsiphone bourbonnensis* est endémique aux îles de la Réunion et de Maurice. En mars 2013, un individu au plumage aberrant a été photographié à l'île Maurice. Cet individu était presque entièrement dépourvu de pigmentation, mais possédait un iris de couleur normale et certaines parties du plumage étaient quelque peu colorées. Cette aberration est probablement due à une réduction qualitative d'eumélanine, appelée 'Brown'.

Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone bourbonnensis* is endemic to the islands of Réunion, where the nominate subspecies is common, and Mauritius (subspecies *desolata*), where it is less numerous (BirdLife International 2014). In normal-coloured birds the back, tail and wing feathers are rufous-brown; the vent, belly, breast, nape and throat are grey; in females the cap is dark grey, while in males it is iridiscent black; legs and bill are dark grey to blue; the irides are black (Fig. 1). In March 2013 an aberrant-coloured individual was observed in

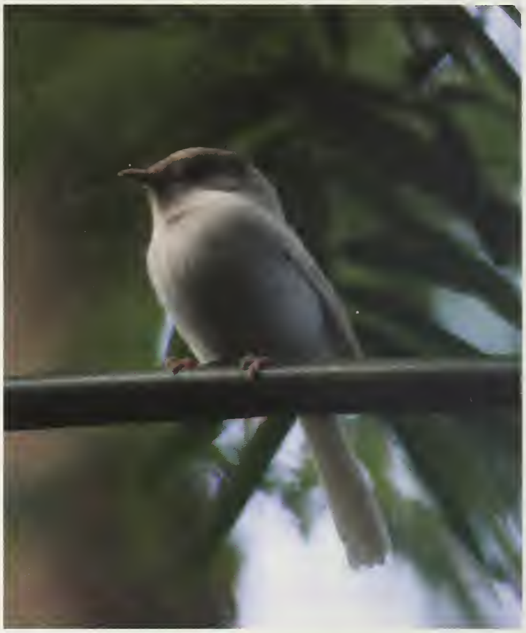


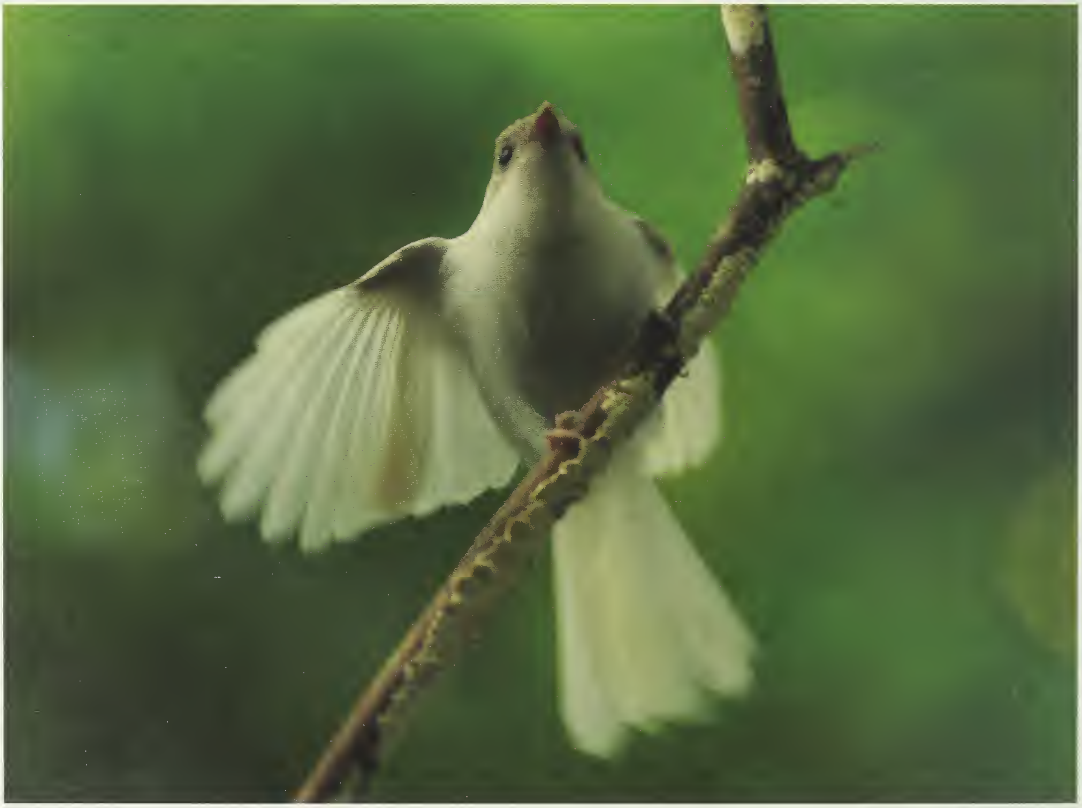
Figures 1–2. Male Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone bourbonnensis desolata* with normal-coloured plumage, Chamarel, Mauritius, 3 July 2013 (Jacques de Spéville) and La Réunion, 18 December 2010 (Dubi Shapiro)

Tchitrec des Mascareignes *Terpsiphone bourbonnensis desolata* mâle au plumage normal, Chamarel, île Maurice, 3 juillet 2013 (Jacques de Spéville) et La Réunion, 18 décembre 2010 (Dubi Shapiro) the easternmost part of the Black River Gorges National Park in Mauritius by field workers of the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation.

This individual was completely white apart from the cap, which had a brownish hue, and the primaries, secondaries and tail feathers, which were a shade of pale brown, especially where they overlapped. The underwing-coverts were pale grey and the legs and bill were also pale. However, the irides were normally coloured (Figs. 2–3). The individual appeared inquisitive, not territorial and, on a second visit, reacted with subsong to playback, indicating that it might be a female, given that males generally react more aggressively (pers. obs.).

In birds the two main pigments are eumelanin, responsible for black, grey and dark brown colours, and phaeomelanin, which is responsible for reddish-brown to pale buff colorations





Figures 3–4. Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone bourbonnensis desolata* probably with the pigment deficiency Brown, Black River Gorges National Park, Mauritius, 23 April 2013 (Johannes Fischer)

Tchitrec des Mascareignes *Terpsiphone bourbonnensis desolata* ayant probablement le défaut de pigmentation 'Brown', Parc National des Gorges de la Rivière noire, île Maurice, 23 avril 2013 (Johannes Fischer)

(McGraw 2005 *et al.* 2005). Albinistic individuals completely lack both melanins in their feathers, eyes and skin (van Grouw 2006, 2012, 2013). This flycatcher is not an albino because the irides were normally coloured and some feathers pigmented. Leucism, a local but complete lack of both melanins in only the feathers and skin (van Grouw 2006, 2012, 2013), can also be excluded because of the reduced, but not complete lack of pigmentation. The most likely explanation for this bird's coloration is a mutation known as Brown, which causes a qualitative reduction of eumelanin. Birds appear paler than normal and become increasingly so because the not-fully oxidised eumelanin bleaches in sunlight, thus parts that are less exposed to sunlight are darker. Phaeomelanin is not affected (van Grouw 2006, 2012, 2013). Thus Brown seems a likely explanation as the overlapping parts of the plumage appear darker and the irides are normally coloured. The grey hue to the cap can be explained by a higher concentration of eumelanin in this plumage tract. The aberration could also be caused by a quantative reduction in melanins since in these mutations the plumage bleaches as with Brown, but such aberrations are rarer (van Grouw 2006, 2012, 2013).

This is the first record of such an aberration in this species. Birds expressing Brown have been shown to reproduce succesfully (van Grouw 2012). However, colour can affect fitness (Baker *et al.* 1978, Galeotti *et al.* 2003). Furthermore, Brown is a single-gene mutation and recessively sex-linked (i.e. almost all birds expressing Brown are females). This supports our presumption that the bird in question was a female. It will be interesting to see if this aberration persists within the population.

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Photospot:

Melanistic Striated Heron *Butorides striata* in Djibouti

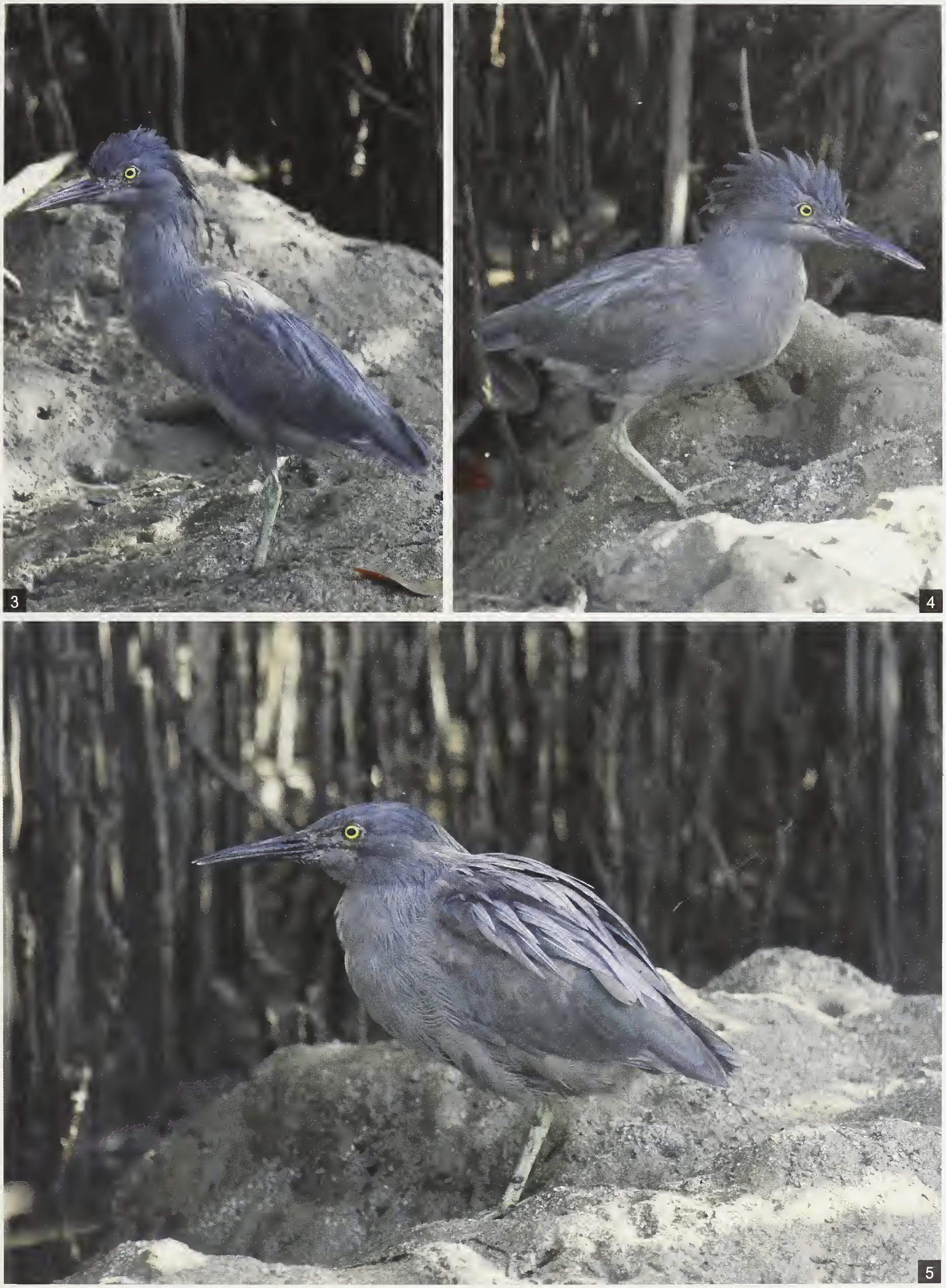
Jens Hering

Un Héron strié *Butorides striata* mélanique à Djibouti. Un Héron strié *Butorides striata* mélanique a été photographié dans les mangroves de Godoria, Djibouti, le 5 janvier 2014. Jusqu'à présent aucun autre Héron strié mélanique n'a été observé en Afrique, mais le Natural History Museum, Tring, Royaume-Uni, possède un mâle foncé collecté au Somaliland en janvier 1897 et deux oiseaux mélaniques du Yemen et de Oman. Ces données pourraient indiquer que cette forme distincte se trouve occasionellement dans la région. Les observateurs visitant les côtes de l'Afrique de l'Est et de l'Arabie sont encouragés à garder l'œil ouvert pour des oiseaux de couleur semblable.

During reed warbler *Acrocephalus* spp. studies at Godoria mangroves on the north-east coastal plain of Djibouti (12°09'4.15"N 43°24'37.27"E; Figs. 1–2), a melanistic Striated Heron *Butorides striata* with only one leg was observed in the early afternoon of 5 January 2014 (Figs. 3–5). At low tide the heron was at the edge of a *c*.5 m-high stand of Grey Mangrove *Avicennia marina*. During the ten-minute observation the bird caught a Common Mudskipper *Periophthalmus kalolo*

Figures 1–2. Godoria mangroves, Obock, Djibouti, where the melanistic Striated Heron *Butorides striata* was observed on 5 January 2014 (Jens Hering)

Les mangroves de Godoria, Obock, Djibouti, où le Héron strié *Butorides striata* mélanique a été observé, 5 janvier 2014 (Jens Hering)



Figures 3–5. Melanistic Striated Heron *Butorides striata*, Godoria mangroves, Obock, Djibouti, 5 January 2014 (Jens Hering)

Héron strié *Butorides striata* mélanique, mangroves de Godoria, Obock, Djibouti, 5 janvier 2014 (Jens Hering)

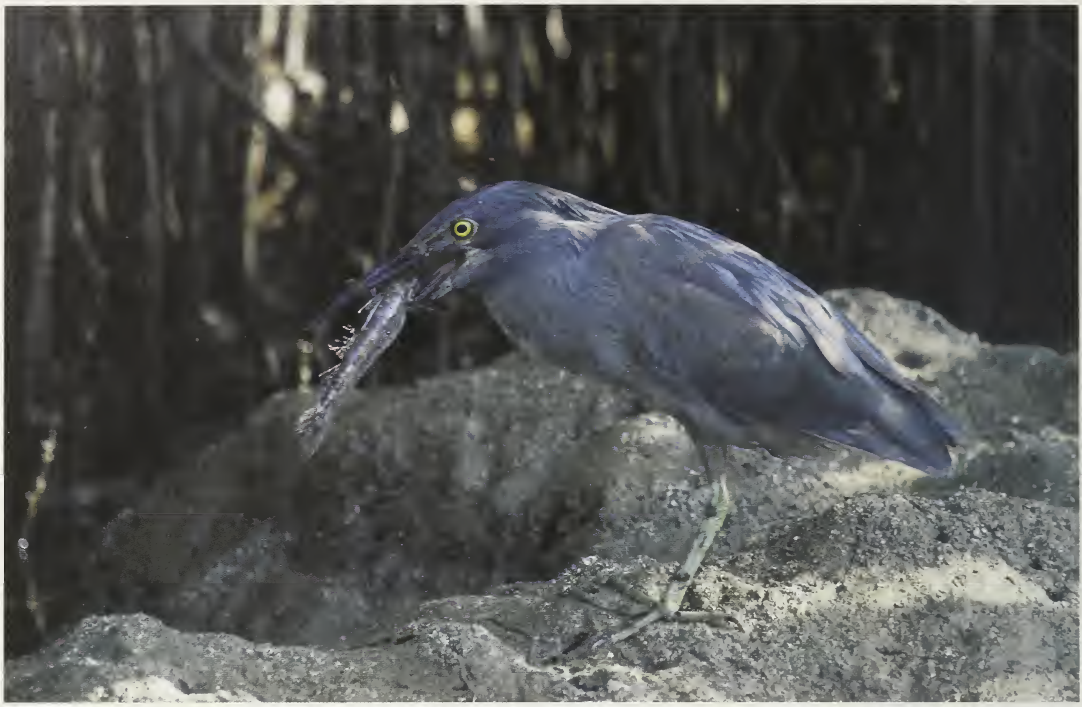


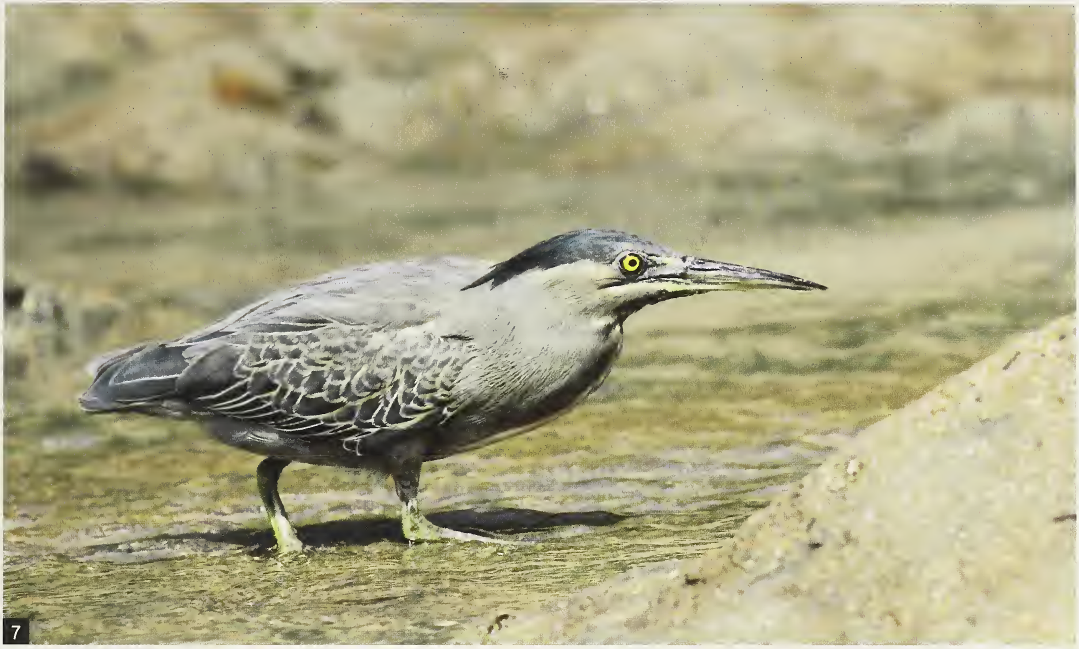
Figure 6. Melanistic Striated Heron *Butorides striata* with Common Mudskipper *Periophthalmus kalolo* prey, Godoria mangroves, Obock, Djibouti, 5 January 2014 (Jens Hering)

Héron strié *Butorides striata* mélanique ayant capturé un périophthalme *Periophthalmus kalolo*, mangroves de Godoria, Obock, Djibouti, 5 janvier 2014 (Jens Hering

(Fig. 6). Shortly thereafter it flew and, after a brief rest, disappeared into the mangrove thicket. A search on the following day and on 10 and 11 January, failed to relocate the bird. Daily sightings were made of several normal-coloured individuals of the subspecies *brevipes* (Fig. 7), which occurs along the Red Sea coast south to northern Somalia (Martínez-Vilalta & Motis 1992, Kushlan & Hancock 2005). A bird of the rust-coloured morph was also observed (Fig. 8).

The dark Striated Heron displayed the following characteristics. Generally uniform bluish grey; crest (in moult) and rectrices slightly darker; scapulars with marked white shafts. Primary- and secondary-coverts, uppertail-coverts, rump and belly lightly tinged wine-red, foreneck and breast with narrow, wine-red vertical stripe becoming grey lower down. Pale fringes to the coverts completely lacking. Bill and naked loral skin dark bluish grey, tips and cutting edges of maxilla and mandible horn-coloured, legs greenish yellow blotched grey, claws grey to horn-coloured. Irides bright yellow. It is impossible to know whether this Striated Heron was a dark morph, if there are other genetic reasons or if physical problems (missing leg) were responsible for the chromatic aberration (H. van Grouw pers. comm.).

To date no other melanistic Striated Herons have been observed in Africa (Brown *et al.* 1982, Martínez-Vilalta & Motis 1992, Kushlan & Hancock 2005). However, the Natural History Museum, Tring, UK, possesses a dark-coloured male specimen collected in Berbera, Somaliland, by E. Lort Phillips on 19 January 1897 (Fig. 9). The same collection also has two melanistic specimens from Arabia, a female collected in the vicinity of Aden, Yemen, on 4 November 1907 (Fig. 10) and the wings of a bird from Khor Dhian, Batinah coast, Oman, collected by C. J. Seton-Browne on 29 August 1968 (Fig. 11). In addition to the extremely dark colouring, it is noteworthy that the usual pale fringes to the wing-coverts are completely absent in these three individuals. The locations in Somaliland and in Yemen are *c.*260 km and 150 km, respectively, from that of the bird observed in Djibouti.



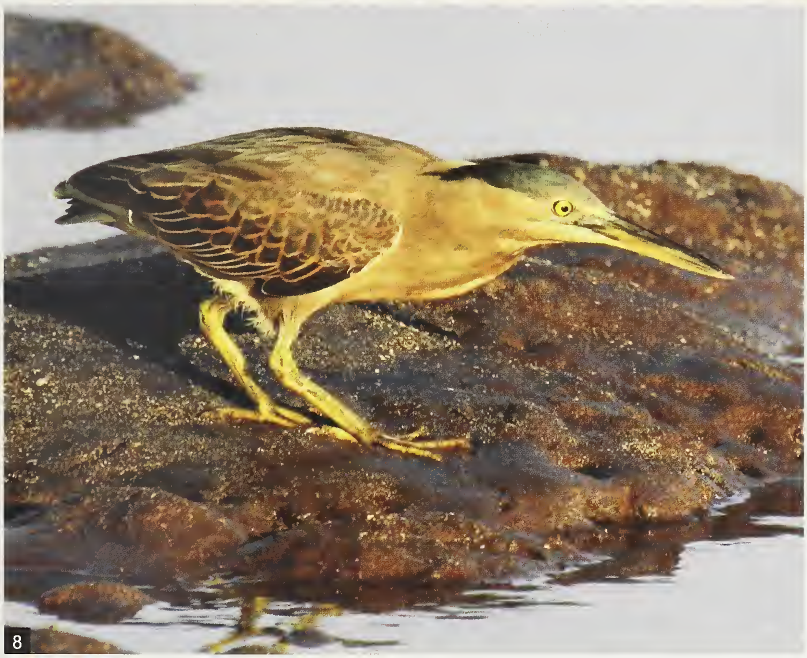


Figure 7. Normal-coloured Striated Heron *Butorides striata brevipes*, Godoria mangroves, Obock, Djibouti, 10 January 2014 (Jens Hering)

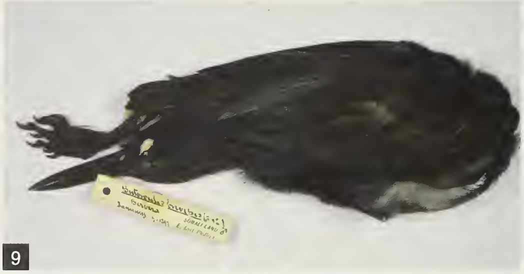
Héron strié *Butorides striata brevipes* au plumage normal, mangroves de Godoria, Obock, Djibouti, 10 janvier 2014 (Jens Hering)

Figure 8. Rust-coloured morph of Striated Heron *Butorides striata*, Godoria mangroves, Obock, Djibouti, 6 January 2014 (Jens Hering)

Héron strié *Butorides striata* de la forme roussâtre, mangroves de Godoria, Obock, Djibouti, 6 janvier 2014 (Jens Hering)

A comparable dark-coloured Striated Heron occurs on the Galápagos Islands: Lava or Galápagos Heron *B. s. sundevalli* is dimorphic, having both a dark morph, well adapted to the background of the lava coast, and a pale morph (Kushlan & Hancock 2005, Kushlan 2009). Of the closely related Green Heron *B. virescens*, which was formerly treated as conspecific, melanistic individuals have recently been observed in Cuba (McLachlan 2011).

The observation documented here, as well as the specimens from Somaliland, Yemen and Oman, could indicate that this distinctive colour type occasionally occurs in the region. Observers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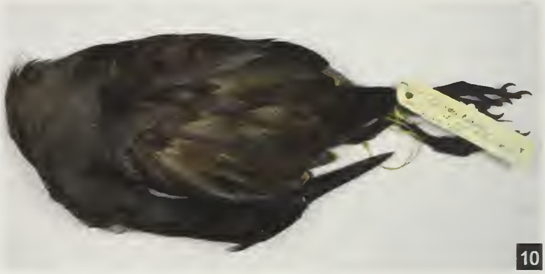
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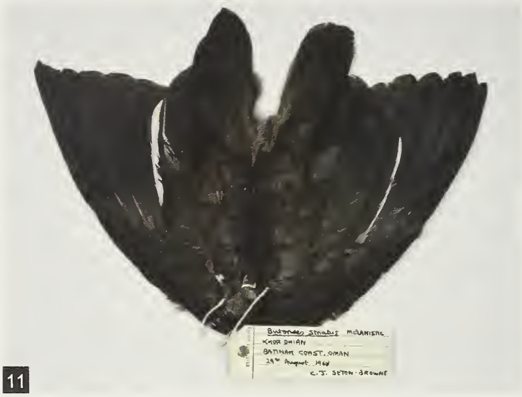

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Figure 9. Melanistic Striated Heron *Butorides striata*, collected in Somaliland on 19 January 1897; BMNH 1898.7.27.186 (Hein van Grouw / © Natural History Museum, Tring)

Héron strié *Butorides striata* mélanique, collecté au Somaliland le 19 janvier 1897; BMNH 1898.7.27.186 (Hein van Grouw / © Natural History Museum, Tring)

Figure 10. Melanistic Striated Heron *Butorides striata*, collected west of Aden, Yemen, on 4 November 1907; BMNH 1934.1.1.1600 (Hein van Grouw / © Natural History Museum, Tring)

Héron strié *Butorides striata* mélanique, collecté à l'ouest d'Aden, Yemen, le 4 novembre 1907; BMNH 1934.1.1.1600 (Hein van Grouw / © Natural History Museum, Tring)

Figure 11. Melanistic Striated Heron *Butorides striata*, collected at Khor Dhian, Batinah coast, Oman, on 29 August 1968; BMNH 1980.4.127 (Hein van Grouw / © Natural History Museum, Tring)

Héron strié *Butorides striata* mélanique, collecté à Khor Dhian, côte de la Batinah, Oman, le 29 août 1968; BMNH 1980.4.127 (Hein van Grouw / © Natural History Museum, Tring)

visiting East African and Arabian coasts should look out for similarly coloured birds.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to my wife Heidi, and Houssein A. Rayaleh for their support in the field. Hein van Grouw searched the Tring collection and provided valuable comments. For other assistance I am grateful to Peter H. Barthel, David Conlin, Ron Demey, Gerd Fanghänel, James A. Kushlan, Till Töpfer and Donald Turner.

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Recent Reports

These are largely unconfirmed records published for interest only; **records are mostly from late 2013 and early 2014, with a few from earlier dates**. We thank all birders who have sent in their records and urge them to submit full details to the relevant national or regional organisations. It is suggested that observations of each species be compared with relevant literature to set new data in context and that observers who are unfamiliar with the status of birds in a particular country refer to the ABC country checklists (www.africanbirdclub.org/countries/checklists/index.html) or more recent or appropriate sources before submitting records.

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Les observations ci-après sont en majeure partie non confirmées et sont publiées uniquement dans le but d'informer. **La plupart des données sont de fin 2013 et début 2014 ; quelques-unes sont plus anciennes.** Nous remercions tous les ornithologues qui ont pris la peine de nous faire parvenir leurs données et nous recommandons de les envoyer, dûment documentées, aux organisations nationales ou régionales concernées. Il est conseillé de vérifier le statut des espèces observées dans la littérature appropriée, afin de mettre les nouvelles données en perspective, et de consulter notamment les 'checklists' des pays africains du ABC (www.africanbirdclub.org/countries/checklists/index.html) ou des sources plus récentes ou appropriées.

Angola

Reports from February–May 2014 include the following. A **Lesser Moorhen** *Gallinula angulata* was observed in the Funda area, 30 km east of Luanda on 4 May. Three **Common Redshanks** *Tringa totanus* were at Mussulo Bay, Luanda, on 18 February 2014; this Palearctic migrant is quite scarce in Angola. On 21 May, the following were recorded 15 km east of Caxito: **Monteiro's Bushshrike** *Malaconotus monteiri*, **Gabela Helmetshrike** *Prionops gabela*, **Angola Batis** *Batis minulla*, **White-fronted Wattle-eye** *Platysteira albifrons* and **Golden-backed Bishop** *Euplectes aureus* in breeding plumage (*MM*).

Azores

In the period January–May 2014, the following were reported. The second **Common Merganser** *Mergus merganser* for the archipelago, on Terceira on 12 February, was probably the first of the North American subspecies *americanus* for the Western Palearctic. The long-staying **Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps* at Lagoa Azul, São Miguel, was still present in April. An immature **Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio martinicus* was at Conceição, Horta, Faial, on 16–20 February at least. An **American Coot** *Fulica americana* first seen at Lagoa Azul, São Miguel, on 6 November, was still present in April. An immature **Yellow-crowned Night Heron** *Nyctanassa violacea* observed at Ribeira de São Francisco, Santa Maria, from 31 December 2013 to 16 January was a new arrival. From 24 January to at least late April, a second calendar-year **Green Heron** *Butorides virescens* stayed on São Miguel. A **Short-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus griseus* remained at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, into May; it was first recorded in September 2013. A **Northern Flicker** *Colaptes auratus* at Pedro Miguel, Faial, on 26–27 February was probably the same individual observed on the island on 30 September 2013. The long-staying **Hudsonian Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus* remained at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, into May (per *Dutch Birding* 36: 122–129, 197, 200).

Botswana

The following were reported in January–May 2014. A **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* was regularly seen in a Maun garden on 24 March–9 April (per *TH*). Single **Martial Eagles** *Polemaetus bellicosus* were reported from the Botswana Defence Force camp at Pandamatenga on 1 February (*DH*) and Chobe National Park (=NP) on 21 February (*HH*). An **Amur Falcon** *Falco amurensis* was observed in Chobe NP on 21 February (*HH*). Eight **Wattled Cranes** *Grus carunculatus* were counted on Jao and Kwetsani Flats on 28 January (*MK*), and eight in Nata Sanctuary on 2 March, with three there on 30 March (*DH*). A **Striped Crake** *Aenigmatolimnas marginalis* was photographed at Boro Pans, *c.*10 km from Maun, on 29–30 March (*VF*). **Black-tailed Godwits** *Limosa limosa* were seen in Chobe NP on 16 March (one; *LF*) and Nata Sanctuary on 30 May (eight; per *TH*). A **Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos* was photographed near Third Bridge, in Moremi Game Reserve, on 8–10 April (per *ST*). A **Schalow's Turaco** *Tauraco schalowi* was discovered south of Mogotho campsites at Khwai on 28 April (*JR*); this is the southernmost record of the species. About a dozen **Common Quails** *Coturnix coturnix* were counted at Potswane Pan, west of Masetleng Pan, on 20–21 May (*CB*). A **Yellow-bellied Greenbul** *Chlorocichla* *flaviventris* in a Phakalane garden, near Gaborone, on 29 May, was well out of range (*SW-P*); the nearest area where the species occurs regularly is along the Limpopo at Parr's Halt, though it may be found as far as Buffel's Drift. Also well out of their known ranges were a **Burnt-necked Eremomela** *Eremomela usticollis* near Kgokge Pan, east of Ncaang, on 19 May (*CB*) and a group of 10–12 **Magpie Mannikins** *Lonchura fringilloides* at Savute on 14 February (*DW*, per *ST*).

Cameroon

Records from the period December 2013–June 2014 include the following.The male **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* discovered on the outskirts of Yaoundé in October 2013 was last seen in the area on 9 February (*ML & MvB*). A **Hooded Vulture** *Necrosyrtes monachus* flying over Yaoundé on 2 February was possibly the same individual observed on 24 November 2013 (*Bull. ABC* 21: 95; *RF*). An **African Cuckoo Hawk** *Aviceda cuculoides* and a pale-morph **Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* were noted just north of Yaoundé on 5 January (*ML & MvB*). A **Jack Snipe** *Lymnocryptes minimus* was found at a small pond at Bonabéri, Douala, on 24 January (*FN*); there are very few records of the species. The **Pearl-spotted Owlet** *Glaucidium perlatum* discovered at Yaoundé Golf Club in October 2013 remained throughout the period and appears to be resident. A pair of **Freckled Nightjars** *Caprimulgus tristigma* was observed on Yemekom inselberg, west of Akonolinga, on 31 December (*ML & MvB*).

A colony of **Rock Martins** *Hirundo fuligula* was found on buildings in Abong Mbang on 25 December, east of previously known populations in the country (*ML & MvB*). **Ethiopian Swallows** *Hirundo aethiopica* were observed at Douala in March; the species appears to be expanding its range south and was first recorded here in 2006. A **Plain-backed Pipit** *Anthus leucophrys* was identified on Mount Cameroon on 20 March (*NB*). At Yaoundé Golf Club, breeding by **Long-legged Pipits** *A. pallidiventris* was confirmed in November 2013; a pair with juveniles remained until at least June (Fig. 1). Areas around Yaoundé were successfully searched for **Long-billed Pipit** *A. similis*, which was found to be common on two inselbergs near Nkolbisson and further east, near Akonolinga; the species had not been recorded in central Cameroon since 1950. An **Isabelline Shrike** *Lanius isabellinus* was observed near Ebebda, along the Sanaga River, on 28 December, at exactly the same spot and even in the same tree as one, presumably the same individual, which wintered there in 2012–13 (*ML & MvB*).

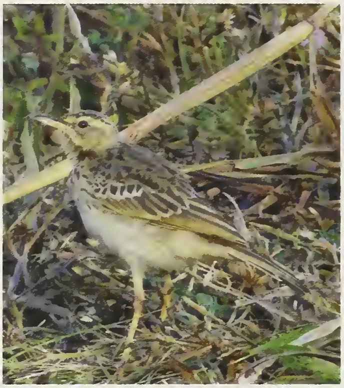


Figure 1. Juvenile Long-legged Pipit / Pipit à longues pattes *Anthus pallidiventris*, Yaoundé Golf Club, Cameroon, 26 January 2014 (Marc Languy)

Canary Islands

Records from October 2013–March 2014 include the following. The first **Abyssinian Roller** *Coracias abyssinicus* for the archipelago was discovered at Barranco de la Torre, Antigua, Fuerteventura, on 9 June; it was present until 13 June at least (per *JAL*). The first **Semipalmated Plover** *Charadrius semipalmatus* for the Canaries, discovered on La Palma on 4 October, was still present on 4 April (*RBu*), whilst the first **Wilson's Snipes** *Gallinago delicata* remained on Tenerife from October 2013 until 17 February at least (*RB*).

A **Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus* flew past the harbour at El Cotillo, Fuerteventura, on 16 March (*KB, SB, JD & LD*). **Black Storks** *Ciconia nigra* were reported from La Palma on 17 October (one) and Gran Canaria on 21 October (two) (per *JAL*) and 27 February (two; *DC & JD*). A male **Green-winged Teal** *Anas (crecca) carolinensis* was at Armenine Reservoir, Tenerife, on 9 February (*MB*). A female **Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis* stayed at Embalse de Frontera, El Hierro, on 7–29 November (per *JAL*). Eleven **Common Scooters** *Melanitta nigra* were at Playa Bastian, Costa Teguise, Lanzarote, on 3 March, with a **Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia* also there the next day (*GO*). A **Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus* was photographed at El Médanio, Tenerife, on 13 January. A **Bonaparte's Gull** *Chroicocephalus philadelphia* was at Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Gran Canaria, from 15 February into March; there are only three previous records of this American vagrant for the Canaries. A second-winter **Audouin's Gull** *Ichthyaetus audouinii* was observed on Tenerife on 13 November. Single **Glaucous Gulls** *Larus hyperboreus* were reported from La Graciosa on 25–30 January, Tenerife, on 24 January–21 February, and Gran Canaria on 18 February–2 March (per *JL*).

The first **Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus* for La Palma was photographed at Fuencaliente on 9 April; there are only ten previous records for the archipelago (*RBu*). Up to 26 **Yellow-browed Warblers** *Phylloscopus inornatus* wintered on Fuerteventura and Lanzarote. An **African Desert Warbler** *Sylvia deserti*, first reported on 30 October, remained on La Graciosa until at least 26 November (per *Dutch Birding* 36: 54).

Cape Verde Islands

The first **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* for the archipelago was an immature photographed near the airport of Boavista on 21 December 2013. An **Intermediate Heron** *Egretta intermedia* and two **Black Herons** *E. ardesiaca* were still present at Barragem de Poilão, Santiago, in March 2014; they were first observed here in March 2011 (per *Dutch Birding* 36: 47, 124).

Central African Republic

A **Böhm's Spinetail** *Neafrapus boehmi* flew over Dzanga Bai, in the 'Aires Protegés de Dzanga Sangha', on 16 February 2014, with several Sabine's Spinetails *Rhaphidura sabini*; it was noticeably smaller with a shorter tail than the latter (*MvB*).

Congo-Brazzaville

The first olivebacks *Nesocharis* for the country were photographed at Bilinga, in the Mayombe, on 14 February 2014 (*VD-P & JM*); they were initially identified as Shelley's Oliveback *N. shelleyi*, a species known only from south-east Nigeria / south-west Cameroon, but recently discovered olivebacks in Angola (*cf. Bull. ABC* 19: 94), which appear very similar to the Mayombe birds, have now been identified as **White-collared Olivebacks** *N. ansorgei*, previously considered to be a local East African endemic.

Côte d'Ivoire

A *Sterna* tern photographed near Vieux Lahou, at the mouth of the Bandama River, on 5 October 2013 (Fig. 2) was subsequently identified as an **Arctic Tern** *S. paradisaea*; there are few certain records of the species, all of them from before 1985. Noteworthy records at the same site during February–May 2014 include a **Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* present from 23 March until at least 20 April, a **Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* on 8 March, and a **Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* in breeding plumage on 25 May. On 23 March, a pair of **Knob-billed Ducks** *Sarkidiornis melanotos* was sighted at Campeix Lake, near Assouinde (Fig. 3); this is the seventh record for the country, and the third from the coast. Visits to the Assouinde area in February–May confirmed the continued presence of species that were considered scarce in Côte d'Ivoire but have been regularly observed there since late 2012: **African Darter** *Anhinga rufa* (two on 11 May), **Hartlaub's Duck** *Pteronnetta hartlaubii* (six in March–May), **Spur-winged Goose** *Plectropterus gambensis* (1–5 in the same period) and **Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus* (*c.*20); the latter can now be considered resident in the area (*LS*). Three to four **House Sparrows** *Passer domesticus* discovered near Abidjan international airport in May 2013 were still present in July 2014 and appear to be resident (*LS*); House Sparrows were also reported from San Pedro harbour in September 2013, Yopougon, Abidjan, on 25 February 2014 (*EL* per *LS*), Grand Bassam in April and inside the terminal of Abidjan airport in May (*LS*).

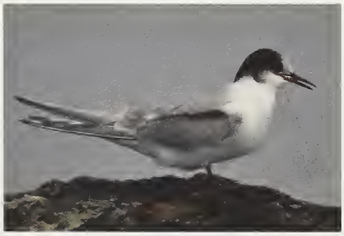


Figure 2. Arctic Tern / Sterne arctique *Sterna paradisaea*, Vieux Lahou, Côte d'Ivoire, 5 October 2013 (Lionel Sineux)

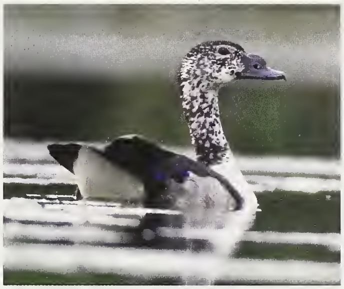


Figure 3. Knob-billed Duck / Canard à bosse *Sarkidiornis melanotos*, Campeix Lake, Assouinde, Côte d'Ivoire, 23 March 2014 (Lionel Sineux)

DR Congo

In April 2014, an indigobird *Vidua* imitating the song of Peters's Twinspot *Hypargos niveoguttatus* was photographed near Sakania, in extreme south-eastern Katanga Province, near the border with Zambia, and identified as **Zambezi** (=Green) **Indigobird** *Vidua codringtoni* (Fig. 4; *NV*); the species was first found at this site in April 2013 and constituted an addition to the country list (*Bull. ABC* 20: 222). In Bombo-Lumene Game Reserve, an Important Bird Area east of Kinshasa, a **Dark Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax metabates* and an **Ayres's Eagle** *Hieraaetus ayresii* were observed on 7 June (*ML*).

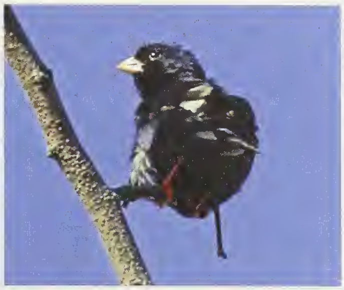


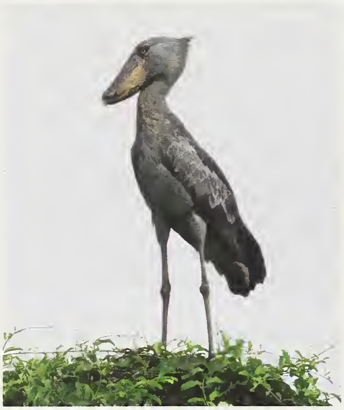
Figure 4. Zambezi Indigobird / Combassou de Codrington *Vidua codringtoni*, Sakania, Katanga, DR Congo, 13 April 2014 (Nigel Voaden)

Egypt

A **Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis* was singing along the Red Sea coast at Wadi Lahami on 15 April 2014; the species was discovered there on 21 April 2012 (*Limicola* 26: 253–278; *Bull. ABC* 21: 19). The next day, two **Goliath Herons** *Ardea goliath* were photographed at Hamata mangroves. An eagle photographed near Ras Shuqeir, *c.*120 km north of Hurghada, on 3 May 2013 has been identified as a juvenile pale-morph **Wahlberg's Eagle** *Hieraaetus wahlbergi*, the first for the Western Palearctic. Two **Sooty Falcons** *Falco concolor* were hunting above Hamata mangroves on 17 April—a very early date. A **Rosy Starling** *Pastor roseus* was at El Gouna on 7–8 May (per *Dutch Birding* 36: 197–205).

Ethiopia

In February 2014, three adult **Northern Bald Ibises** *Geronticus eremita* were found in a remote corner of the Ethiopian highlands. The three included the female 'Zenobia', an unringed adult accompanying Zenobia, and a solitary bird. In 2013, only the satellite-tagged 'Zenobia' returned



Figures 5–6. Shoebills / Becs-en-sabot du Nil *Balaeniceps rex*, Doma Swamp, Gambela, Ethiopia, 15 April 2014 (Håkan Pohlstrand)

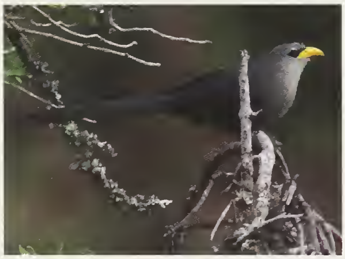


Figure 7. Yellowbill / Malcoha à bec jaune *Ceuthmochares aereus*, Gambela, 14 April 2014 (Håkan Pohlstrand)

to the breeding grounds of the tiny, relict population rediscovered in Syria in 2002 (per *CBo*). In April, 10–12 **Shoebills** *Balaeniceps rex* were observed in the eastern part of Doma Swamp, along the Alowero River, 40 km south-west of Gambela; remarkably, most were perching in trees (Figs. 5–6). Two **Yellowbills** *Ceuthmochares aereus* were observed 60 km east of Gambela (Fig. 7); this is a new locality for the species, which is possibly a very rare resident (*cf.* Ash & Atkins 2009. *Birds of Ethiopia and Eritrea*). At least six **Piapiacs** *Ptilostomus afer* were noted 60 km west of Gambela (Fig. 8); Ash & Atkins (2009) accept only one record, from the south (*HP*). An active nest of **Abyssinian Catbird** *Parophasma galinieri* was found at Bale Mountain Lodge, Bale Mountains National Park, on 22 February (*JKN*).

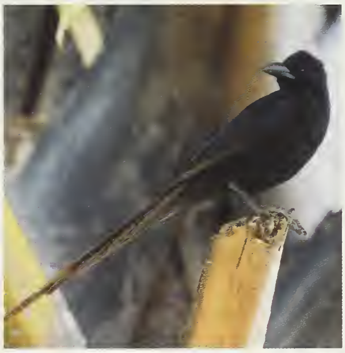


Figure 8. Piapiac / Piapiac africain *Ptilostomus afer*, Gambela, 2 April 2014 (Håkan Pohlstrand)

The Gambia

A **Quail-plover** *Ortyxelos meiffrenii* was photographed at Kiang West National Park on 19 April 2014 (*YB*).

Ghana

An **Ovambo Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter ovampensis* at Shai Hills on 17 April 2014 was apparently only the second record for the reserve (*NB*). Both an **American** *Pluvialis dominica* and a **Pacific Golden Plover** *P. fulva* were photographed at Muni Lagoon, near Winneba, in February (*HW, AR*); the former species appears to be a quite regular visitor to the country's lagoons. A **Red-necked Nightjar** *Caprimulgus ruficollis* photographed in Mole National Park on 28 November 2013 (Fig. 9; *OS & VH*) is the third record for Ghana; the first was a specimen collected at Gambaga on 28 March 1901 and the second one photographed at Nsuatre on 16 February 2013 (per *RD*). A **Northern Red-billed Hornbill** *Tockus erythrorhynchus* flew over Bobiri Forest on 24 April. A male **Vitelline Masked Weaver** *Ploceus vitellinus* in breeding plumage was observed at Winneba Plains on 17 April (*NB*).

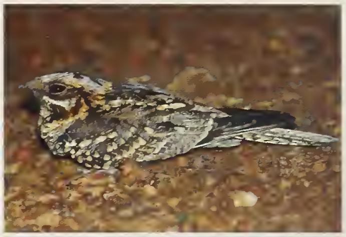


Figure 9. Red-necked Nightjar / Engoulevent à collier roux *Caprimulgus ruficollis*, Mole National Park, Ghana, 28 November 2013 (Otto Schmidt)

Kenya

The following reports are from January–June 2014, with a few from November–December 2013. Probably the most remarkable sighting of the period was that of at least 600 migrating **Levant Sparrowhawks** *Accipiter brevipes* at Mara North Conservancy, near Kicheche Mara Camp, on 23 February (*MMo*); details will be published in a future *Bull. ABC*.

An albatross, probably a **Shy Albatross** *Diomedea cauta*, was observed in the Pemba Channel on 24 January; very few albatrosses have been reported from the Kenyan coast. Also in the Pemba Channel, a **Masked Booby** *Sula dactylatra* was seen in the first week of January;

this is also a very infrequently reported species. Two **Black Storks** *Ciconia nigra* in Nairobi National Park (=NP) on 26 May is a very late date for this migrant. Also in Nairobi NP, a juvenile **Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus* was seen on 20 January and an adult on 17 February. Seventeen **Amur Falcons** *Falco amurensis* were counted at Sangailu, near the Somali border, on 1 April, with 57 there the next day. A recently dead **Corncrake** *Crex crex* was found along the Burguret River between Naro Moru and Nanyuki on 24 November; this uncommon species had not been reported from this area for many years. A pair of **Lesser Jacanas** *Microparra capensis* with a chick was observed at Engineer, Kinangop, on 1 February; there are only two or three confirmed breeding records for Kenya. An adult **Greater Painted-snipe** *Rostratula benghalensis* with a juvenile was seen in Nairobi NP on 10 March; this is another species for which there are very few breeding records. A **Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* in Nairobi NP on 10 June is a very late date. A **Grey-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* in the same park on 11 February is the first documented record for Nairobi. A **Pel's Fishing Owl** *Scotopelia peli*, a very infrequently recorded species, was photographed on the Rojaweru River, Meru, on 23 February (Fig. 10). An adult **White-throated Bee-eater** *Merops albicollis* in Nairobi NP on 24 March is the first record for the well-watched Nairobi area. Single **Eurasian Wrynecks** *Jynx torquilla* were reported from Timau on 5 January and Mpala Ranch, Laikipia, on 17 March; this species is usually only recorded every few years. An adult female **Golden-tailed Woodpecker** *Campethera abingoni* in Karen, Nairobi, on 12 March, and an immature at Ngong Forest, Karen, on 2 April, are very unusual records away from the species' normal range. An **African Pitta** *Pitta angolensis* in Arabuko-Sokoke Forest on 7 April is the first record in the country for >12 years. The first **Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina* for Nairobi in >10 years was observed in Nairobi NP on 24 March. A **Common Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita* was singing at Turi, Molo, on 7 February; this generally uncommon migrant is more frequently reported from the east side of the Rift Valley. A male **Superb Sunbird** *Cinnyris superbus* was near the Mungatsi River, Busia, on 1 December; the species is rare in Kenya and was last reported four years ago. A **Scarlet-tufted Malachite Sunbird** *Nectarinia johnstoni* at 2,200 m is a low-altitude record for the species, which is normally found above the treeline at 3,000–4,500 m. A calling **Doherty's Bushshrike** *Malaconotus dohertyi* was photographed near Lari Forest Station, Uplands, on 30 May; this species is rare on the western side of the Aberdares in the Rift Valley. Three **Village Weavers** *Ploceus cucullatus* of the race *bohndorffi* were noted at Lake Naivasha on 26 January, with an adult male on the opposite side of the lake on 20 June displaying at a nest; this race is normally restricted to the Lake Victoria basin east to Kaptagat, whereas these birds were at least 150 km further east (per *CJ*).

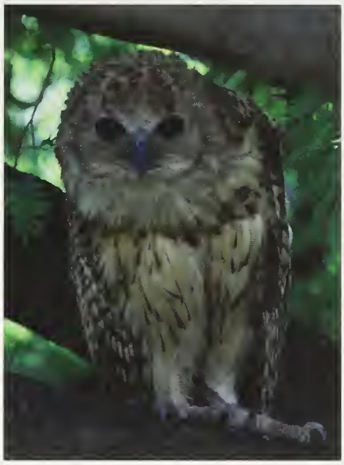


Figure 10. Pel's Fishing Owl / Chouette-pêcheuse de Pel *Scotopelia peli*, Rojaweru River, Meru, Kenya, 23 February 2014 (Sammy Mugo)

Liberia

A short survey in Grand Cape Mount County, in the south-west, in June 2014, confirmed the presence of 62 species new for the relevant square in Gatter (1997. *Birds of Liberia*). Records of **Lead-coloured Flycatcher** (=Grey Tit-flycatcher) *Myioparus plumbeus* and **Bioko Batis** *Batis poensis* represent considerable range extensions, although the former has now been recorded both in the east and the west of the country (*Bull. ABC* 13: 103–104; 18: 235). Additional new square records include those of **Crowned Eagle** *Stephanoaetus coronatus*, **Willcocks's Honeyguide** *Indicator willcocksi*, **Green-tailed Bristlebill** *Bleda eximius*, **Yellow-bearded Greenbul** *Criniger olivaceus*, **Rufous-winged Illadopsis** *Illadopsis rufescens* and **Copper-tailed Glossy Starling** *Lamprotornis cupreicauda* (*NB*).

Mauritania

A **Dark-bellied Brent Goose** *Branta* (*bernicla*) *bernicla* (or perhaps a Black Brant *B.* (*b.*) *nigricans* but not a Pale-bellied Brent Goose *B.* (*b.*) *hrota*) flew past Arel, Banc d'Arguin, on 29 January 2014 (per *Dutch Birding* 36: 122). A **Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes* at Nouakchott on 6 February was the second for Mauritania (per *Dutch Birding* 36: 124); the first was observed further north, between Nouakchott and Nouâmghâr, on 22 March 2004 (*Bull. ABC* 11: 176).

Morocco

The following records are from the period January–June 2014. Two species were recorded for the first time in Morocco, the first being a **White-backed Vulture** *Gyps africanus* observed with a flock of **Rüppell's Vultures** *G. rueppelli* and **Griffon Vultures** *G. fulvus* near Tétouan on 25 May. Earlier in the month, three Rüppell's Vultures had been seen at Jbel Bouhachem, *c.*40 south of Tétouan, on 10 May and four at Jbel Moussa along the Strait of Gibraltar on 11 May (*MA, KEH & REK*). The second was a **Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*, discovered at Oualidia in early June (*VA*, Fig. 11).

A pelagic trip off Agadir on 8 June produced *c.*30 **White-faced Storm-petrels** *Pelagodroma marina*, a **Wilson's Storm-petrel** *Oceanites*

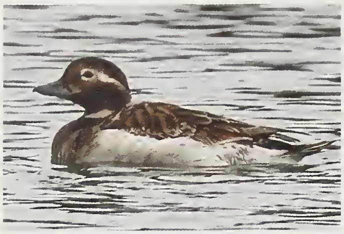


Figure 11. Long-tailed Duck / Harelde boreale *Clangula hyemalis*, Oualidia, Morocco, 5 June 2014 (Vaughan Ashby)

oceanicus, *c.*10 **Balearic Shearwaters** *Puffinus (yelkouan) mauretanicus*, two shearwaters identified as **Yelkouan Shearwaters** *P. yelkouan*, *c.*10 **Manx Shearwaters** *P. puffinus*, a male **Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* in breeding plumage, an adult **Sabine's Gull** *Xema sabini* in breeding plumage, and *c.*10 **Great Skuas** *Stercorarius skua* (*HD*).

In south-western Morocco, a **Dark-bellied Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla* was photographed at Khnifiss on 1 February; three were at the same site on 21 April (*www.go-south.org*, per *Dutch Birding* 36: 195). An **Egyptian Goose** *Alopochen aegyptiaca* was at Ifrane National Park on 1 June (*GM*) and a **Greater White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons* at Oued Ksob on 25 June (*BB*). A **Green-winged Teal** *Anas (crecca) carolinensis* was observed at Khemiss Zemamra on 12 February (*KL*). Rather late **European Honey Buzzards** *Pernis apivorus* were noted at Auberge Yasmina, Merzouga, on 1 June (one), near the Tagdilt Track on 3 June (one), and near Aousserd on 11 June (three; *HD*). At Casablanca, a **Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima* was seen on 18 January (*BM*). A first-winter **Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucoides*, discovered at Oued Chebeika on 4 February (*CdV*), remained there until 26 February at least (*www.go-south.org*), whilst a **Glaucous Gull** *L. hyperboreus* was at Essaouira on 1 January, with two there in early February and one still present on 27 February (*www.go-south.org*, *BB*). A **Ring-billed Gull** *L. delawarensis* was photographed at Essaouira on 15–16 March (*BB*). At Pointe de la Sarga, three **Roseate Terns** *Sterna dougallii* were observed on 12 June (*HD*). A male **Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse** *Pterocles lichtensteinii* was found at Tissint, Tata, on 8 March (per *Dutch Birding* 36: 122).

In March, a higher than usual number of **Isabelline Wheatears** *Oenanthe isabellina* was noted (per *Dutch Birding* 36: 129). A **Rosy Starling** *Pastor roseus* was reported from Cap Beddouza in early March; this could be the third record for Morocco (*www.go-south.org*). Up to four **Sudan Golden Sparrows** *Passer luteus* were at Oued Jenna, Western Sahara, from 1 February into March—the first record for Western Sahara was in the same area in April 2009; one was seen again at Awserd on 23 April (per *Dutch Birding* 36: 130). A flock of >100 **Desert Sparrows** *P. simplex* was at Oued Jenna, with ten 5 km north of Aousserd and 12 *c.*10 km south of Aousserd, on 11 June; none was found near Merzouga (*HD*). A **Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis* photographed at Imlili on 10 February may be the fifth record for Morocco and the first for the Atlantic Sahara (*www.go-south.org*).

Mozambique

Records from January–June 2014 include the following. The first **Red-tailed Shrike** *Lanius phoenicuroides* for Mozambique and the southern African subregion was photographed north of Sena, on the southern banks of the Zambezi River, on 14 January.

Pelagic trips out of Maputo produced a probable **Bulwer's Petrel** *Bulweria bulwerii* and a **European Storm-petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus* on 23 January, and a **Tropical Shearwater** *Puffinus bailloni* as well as a tropicbird *Phaethon* (probably a **White-tailed Tropicbird** *P. lepturus*) in late May. A **Cape Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax capensis*—an extremely rare bird in the country—was at Ponta do Ouro on 29 June. During a seawatch at Maputo on 6 April two immature **Sooty Terns** *Onychoprion fuscatus* and an **Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus* were noted, the latter a rather unusual species for this area. The influx of **European Honey Buzzards** *Pernis apivorus* in southern Africa was also noticeable in Mozambique, with singles reported from Magude on 7 January, near Gorongosa on 11 January, Mapingwe on 13 January, *c.*20 km north of Maputo on 2 February, near Inharrime on 19 February, 2 March (two) and 4 April, and Gorongosa National Park on 1 April.

On 13 June, an **African Oystercatcher** *Haematopus moquini* was observed at Ponta Malongane—this is unusually far north for the species. Southern Africa's fifth **Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris* was located at Ponta da Barra on 29 April; previous records were from West Coast National Park, South Africa, in late 2000 (which returned to the same location for several seasons and was last reported in late 2003), Barra Peninsula, Mozambique, in December 2004 (one) and September 2008 (up to three), and Walvis Bay, Namibia, in November 2008 (one). An **African Skimmer** *Rynchops flavirostris* was found in a tern roost east of Linene Island, in the Bazaruto Archipelago near Vilanculous, on 13 January; this species is very rare in the south of the country. Several **Böhm's Bee-eaters** *Merops boehmi*, first reported in early January near Villa de Sena, Chemba District, were still present until late April at least; this is only the third record for southern Africa, the previous ones being two birds *c.*40 km north-west of Mount Gorongosa in December 1972 and one at Gorongosa National Park in August 2009. A **Basra Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus griseldis* was located at the Zangue River on 23 March (per *TH*).

Namibia

The most remarkable find for the period January–June 2014 was that of a **Barau's Petrel** *Pterodroma baraui* in Namibian waters on 4 February; this is the first record for the country and apparently also the westernmost (*MdB*)—full details will be published in a future *Bull. ABC*.

The influx of **European Honey Buzzards** *Pernis apivorus* in southern Africa was noted in Namibia, with singles near See-eis on 25 January, at Okahandja Country Hotel on 20 February, Daan Viljoen Game Reserve on 23 February, Avis Dam on 13 March, 40 km east of Kalkrand on 16 March, and between Windhoek and Dordabis on 30 March. A juvenile **Allen's Gallinule** *Porphyrio alleni* was located at Monte Christo Guest Farm, north of Windhoek, in mid February. On 28 February, a **Denham's Bustard** *Ardeotis denhami* was observed in Etosha National Park (=NP)—a very westerly locality for the species. A **Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* was in the Walvis Bay area on 22 January, with a second also there at the end of the month and a third in late February; one was still present in early April. A **Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*, first reported at Walvis Bay Lagoon on 30 October 2013, was still present on 27 April whilst, at Walvis Bay Salt Works, an **American Golden Plover** *P. dominica* was also present in January–April, with a second there in late January. At least two **Black-tailed Godwits** *Limosa limosa* were at Fisher's Pan, Etosha NP, on 30 April. Single **Common Redshanks** *Tringa totanus* were recorded at Mile 4 Salt Works, Swakopmund, in late January, Luderitz on 8 February, Walvis Bay in mid March, and Fisher's Pan, Etosha NP, on 20 March. Good numbers of **Red-necked Phalaropes** *Phalaropus lobatus* were present at Walvis Bay in January–March, with at least 70 at the end of January; at least three were at Mile 4 Salt Works, Swakopmund, in late January. A single **Red Phalarope** *P. fulicarius* was at Mile 4 Salt Works on 23 February. A **Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* and two **Gull-billed Terns** *Gelochelidon nilotica* were observed at Okashana Spring, on the Adoni Plains north of Etosha Pan, on 12 March.

A rather out-of-range **Lesser Striped Swallow** *Cecropis abyssinica* was reported from a farm south-east of See-eis on 25 January. A **Southern Black Flycatcher** *Melaenornis pammelaina* at the campsite of Okahandja Country Hotel on 19 January, was also slightly out of range. A **House Crow** *Corvus splendens* located near the Waterfront at Walvis Bay on 3 June, appeared to have been in the area since at least 9 May; this may be the second record for Namibia, following another from Walvis Bay in 2011 (*Bull. ABC* 18: 237), when a single bird remained around Lover's Hill for several months (per *TH*).

Niger

No noteworthy records from late 2013–early 2014 were received. Older records that have surfaced recently include those of a **Black Heron** *Egretta ardesiaca* (fifth record for Niger) and a **Jack Snipe** *Lymnocryptes minimus* (third record but certainly under-recorded), both observed at two different wetlands near Birni N'Konni by the Dutch Montagu's Harrier Foundation expedition on 27 January 2007. Also noteworthy are a **Secretary-bird** *Sagittarius serpentarius*, now possibly extinct in Niger, photographed near Abalak in May 1985, and the fourth record of **Little Owl** *Athena noctua*, at Tezirzek in the Aïr Mountains in January—this species is also under-recorded: the local Touareg appear to know its call and burrowing habits well (*JN*). Photographs can be viewed on the Niger Bird DataBase www.NiBDaB.org (per *JB & UL*).

Rwanda

A presumably oversummering juvenile **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* was observed at Lake Muhazi on 8 and 14 June 2014; the only record in the boreal summer months mentioned by Vande Weghe &Vande Weghe (2011. *Birds in Rwanda*) is that of a bird in Akagera National Park in July 1971. A **Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus* seen in Kigali on 15 May is a late date; the previous latest record is 5 May (*JH*).

Senegal

Records from January–April 2014 include the following. A **Desert Eagle Owl** *Bubo ascalaphus* was observed at Réserve de Faune de Ndiaël, near Rosso Bethio, on 10 May (*BP*); this is the first sight record for the country—the only previous record is that of a bird found dead on Serpent Islet, near Dakar, in March 1974 (a claim of a pair in Basse Casamance in March 1983 undoubtedly represents a misidentification).

In Djoudj National Park, 16 **Black Storks** *Ciconia nigra* were counted on 12–13 January; this species has recently become more regular in the country. Two male **Eurasian Wigeons** *Anas penelope* and 45 **Marbled Teal** *Marmaronetta augustirostris* were also present. Five **Stone-curlews** *Burhinus oedicnemus* were identified near Richard Toll on 11 January. An adult **Laughing Gull** *Leucophaeus atricilla* was at St. Louis on 10 January, with a second-winter possibly also present; previous records of this American vagrant are from further south. Also there were a first- and second-winter **Mediterranean Gull** *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*, a scarce Palearctic winter visitor (*MB*). A nest of a **Greater Swamp Warbler** *Acrocephalus rufescens* was found in a reedbed at the Grand Lac des Maristes, Dakar, on 19 April, with an adult feeding two young ten days later; most records of this species are from the north. Also there were two **Purple Swamphens** *Porphyrio porphyrio* with a juvenile (*MC*). Hundreds of thousands **Red-billed Queleas** *Quelea quelea* were encountered in the Richard Toll area on 11 January (*MB*).

Seychelles

Reports received by Seychelles Bird Records Committee (SBRC) from the period January–May 2014, with a few additional ones from November–December 2013, include the following. Two species were recorded in Seychelles for the second time: **Alpine Swift** *Tachymarptis melba* (one on Mahé on 29 December) and **Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin* (one on Assumption, Aldabra group, on 7 December). A **Madagascar Kestrel** *Falco newtoni* on Assumption on 5 February was the first from anywhere other than Aldabra, where it is resident.

Other records of interest include a **Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon*

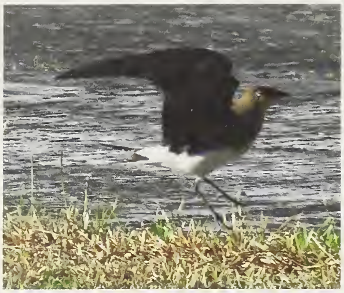


Figure 12. Black-winged Pratincole / Glaréole à ailes noires *Glareola nordmanni*, Desroches, Seychelles, 8–11 April 2014 (Pep Nogués Vera)

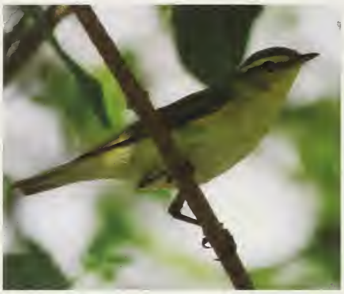


Figure 14. Wood Warbler / Chevalier sylvain *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*, Aldabra, Seychelles, 10 December 2013 (Wilfredo Falcon)

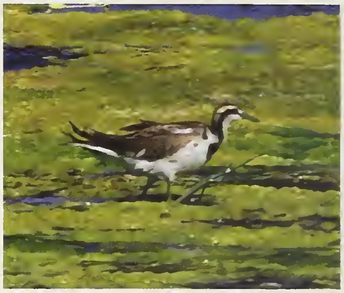


Figure 16. Pheasant-tailed Jacana / Jacana à longue queue *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*, Qadeb, Socotra, 4 January 2014 (David Fisher)

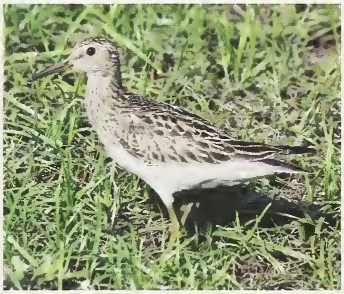


Figure 13. Pectoral Sandpiper / Bécasseau tacheté *Calidris melanotos*, Cousine, Seychelles, 2–30 November 2013 (Iain Oliver)

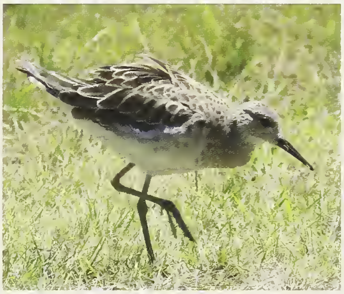


Figure 15. Ruff / Combattant varié *Calidris pugnax*, Alphonse, Seychelles, 4 December 2013 (Aurélie Duhec)

aethereus on Cosmoledo on 8–9 February (ten previous records), a **Madagascar Pond Heron** *Ardeola idae* on Desroches on 6–26 February (six records east of Aldabra where it breeds), a **Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* on Desroches on 22–28 March (seven records), a **Black-winged Pratincole** *Glareola nordmanni* on Desroches on 8–11 April 2014 (13 records; Fig. 12), a **Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos* on Cousine Island on 2–30 November (nine records; Fig. 13), a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus* on St. Anne on 28 April–27 May (seven records), an **Isabelline Wheatear** *Oenanthe isabellina* on Desroches on 20 January (eight records), a **Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* on Aldabra on 10 December (six records; Fig. 14), a **Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla* on Assumption on 21 November (five records) and a **Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio* on Assumption on 28 March, with another on Aldabra on 11 April (eight records).

Also noteworthy were a **Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* on Assumption on 4–7 December, an **Eleonora's Falcon** *F. eleonorae* on Alphonse on 25–28 December, a **Ruff** *Calidris* (=*Philomachus*) *pugnax* on Alphonse on 4 December (Fig. 15), single **Common Cuckoos** *Cuculus canorus* on Alphonse on 12 December, Cousin on 16 December, Assumption on 3 January and Desroches on 14 February, a **Lesser Cuckoo** *C. poliocephalus* found dead on Mahé on 20 January, single **European Rollers** *Coracias garrulus* on Alphonse on 11 December, 24 January and 12 February (probably different individuals) and on Aldabra on 30 March, a **Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava* on Alphonse on 22 March, a **Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe* on Alphonse on 16 February, a **Common Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* on Alphonse on 10 February, a **Common House Martin** *Delichon urbicum* on Desroches on 2 May, a **Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata* on Aldabra on 30 March, and a **Eurasian Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus* on Assumption on 22–23 October, with another on Aldabra on 17–23 January (per *AS*).

Socotra

A visit to the island on 1–4 January 2014 produced four **Cotton Pygmy Geese** *Nettapus coromandelianus* on 3rd—the highest number observed so far and only the fourth record; two **Tufted Ducks** *Aythya fuligula* on 3rd; a **Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* at Deham Lagoon on 2nd; an **Intermediate Egret** *Egretta intermedia* on 4th; a male **Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* of a migrant race on 2nd; a **Pheasant-tailed Jacana** *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* at Qadeb on 2nd and 4th (Fig. 16)—third record; **Black-tailed Godwits** *Limosa limosa* on 1st (one), 3rd (three) and 4th (four); an adult **Nubian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus nubicus* with a juvenile on 3rd—there are few data concerning the species' breeding; and a **Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola* at Qadeb on 2nd and 4th (*DF, SA, JBu, TF, PG & ASS*).

Somaliland

The most noteworthy records from a visit on 28 March–5 April 2014, coinciding with the arrival of the first rains and the start of the breeding season for many species, include the following. **Black-headed Heron** *Ardea melanocephala* was suspected to be nesting in Hargeisa; breeding was known only from Wajaale, with a record of 50 birds nesting in May 1995 (*cf.* Ash & Miskell 1998. *Birds of Somalia*). A pale-morph **Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* observed at Las Geel, *c.*60 km east-northeast of Hargeisa, on 5 April, may be the second record for Somaliland, the first being in December 2010 (*Bull. ABC* 18: 239); the species is probably a frequent passage migrant. A **Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* was seen near Hargeisa on 4 April; there are few spring records. A pair of **Greater Kestrels** *F. rupicoloides* at their nest on Qool-Caday plain, on 4 April, is a new record for Ash & Miskell's (1998) 19c square. A **Three-banded Plover** *Charadrius tricollaris* with a juvenile was found in the wadi at Las Geel on 5 April, suggesting local breeding; there appear to be no confirmed breeding records for Somaliland. A flock of 28 **European Bee-eaters** *Merops apiaster* flew east on 3 April, just before the arrival of a rain front; Ash & Miskell's (1998) mention that 'no spring passage has been noted in the north' [= in Somaliland and Puntland]. A **Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** *M. persicus* was observed at Hargeisa on 29 March, with probably two others on 3 April (with the preceding species); previous spring records in Somaliland date from 26 April–12 May. At least three **Arabian Warblers** *Sylvia leucomelaena* were singing at Las Geel on 5 April; this species is a presumed breeding resident, although it is reported to be quiet and elusive, with no records mentioned for square 19a (Ash & Miskell 1998). Two **Magpie Starlings** *Speculipastor bicolor* were seen near Las Geel on 5 April. In Hargeisa, large numbers of **Chestnut Weavers** *Ploceus rubiginosus* were present. In addition, the usual four species of bustard (**Kori** *Ardeotis kori*, **Buff-crested** *Lophotis gindiana*, **White-bellied** *Eupodotis senegalensis* and **Little Brown Bustard** *E. humilis*) and three species of courser (**Somali** *Cursorius somalensis*, **Three-banded** *Rhinoptilus cinctus* and **Double-banded Courser** *R. africanus*) were observed south and south-east of Hargeisa (*BP*).

South Africa

The following records are from the period January–June 2014. The first **Trindade Petrel** *Pterodroma arminjoniana* for the southern African subregion was photographed *c.*30 nautical miles south-east of Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, on 7 January. Southern Africa's third **Grey-backed Storm-petrel** *Garrodia nereis* was recorded *c.*40 nautical miles south-west of Hout Bay, Western Cape, on 11 January; previous records are from 14 April 2007 and 27 December 2009.

A juvenile **Tristan Albatross** *Diomedea* (*exulans*) *dabbenena* was satellite-tracked into Western Cape waters in early January. Other noteworthy species seen south and west of Cape Point include **Wandering Albatross** *D. exulans* (one on 20 February; several in April; 1–2 on 28 June), **Northern Royal Albatross** *D.* (*epomophora*) *sanfordi* (one on 28 June), **Sooty Albatross** *Phoebetria fusca* (one on 3 April), **Chatham Albatross** *Thalassarche* (*cauta*) *eremita* (one on 12 April; sixth record for southern Africa), **Salvin's Albatross** *T.* (*cauta*) *salvini* (an adult on 20 April), **White-headed Petrel** *Pterodroma lessonii* (one on 3 April), **Spectacled Petrel** *Procellaria conspicillata* (several in late January; four in February; one on 29 March; one on 12 April; one on 28 June), **Flesh-footed Shearwater** *Puffinus carneipes* (one on 8 February) and **Red Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* (several on 8 February). A trawler trip into the waters *c.*30 nautical miles south-east of Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, produced an **Atlantic Petrel** *Pterodroma incerta* and a juvenile **Wandering Albatross** on 7 January. In Eastern Cape, a dead **Barau's Petrel** *P. baraui* was found ashore at Morgan's Bay on 26 April and a dead **Tropical Shearwater** *Puffinus bailloni* at Cannon Rocks two days later.

Pelagic trips out of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, produced a **White-faced Storm-petrel** *Pelagodroma marina*, with several **Sooty Terns** *Onychoprion fuscatus* on 3 May and a **Slender-billed Prion** *Pachyptila belcheri*—a rare species in southern African waters and especially unusual so far north—on 7 June. A prion photographed near Dyer Island, Western Cape, on 21 June was very probably a **Salvin's Prion** *P. salvini*, but with the discovery of a small-billed population of Broad-billed Prion *P. vittata* on Gough Island (perhaps representing a separate species), the bird could not be positively identified (see p. 138). A **Northern Rockhopper Penguin** *Eudyptes moseleyi* was discovered in Plettenberg Bay, Western Cape, on 21 June; the last record of this species concerned a bird that spent five days ashore at Soetwater in late January–early February 2013. Up to two **Australian Gannets** *Morus serrator* were on Malgas Island in Saldahna Bay, Western Cape, during the period, whilst one was also on Bird Island in Algoa Bay, Eastern Cape, in January–March. At the latter locality, a **Red-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon rubricauda* was located in mid March. In KwaZulu-Natal, a **Greater Frigatebird** *Fregata minor* was seen briefly in Richards Bay on 27 April, with another in the Nibela Peninsula / Lake St. Lucia area on 14 May.

In Eastern Cape, a **Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* was observed *c.*20 km from Kei River mouth on 1 March. A **Rufous-bellied Heron** *Ardeola rufiventris* on the Kgomo-Kgomo floodplain, North West Province, was seen again on 5 January. In Western Cape, a **Black Heron** *Egretta ardesiaca* first seen in Knysna in December 2013 was still present in early March. Single **Yellow-billed Storks** *Mycteria ibis* were reported from Brits, North West Province, on 15 January; Camdeboo National Park (=NP), near Graaff-Reinet, Eastern Cape, on 18–19 January; and East London, Eastern Cape, on 15 March. The **African Openbill** *Anastomus lamelligerus* reported near Devon, Mpumalanga, in mid January was relocated in the same area on 15–16 February; in Limpopo Province, at least three were present at Die Eiland from 16 June. **Abdim's Storks** *Ciconia abdimii* were observed in Western Cape (near Plettenberg Bay on 24–25 January; between Vredenburg and Paternoster on 16 February; at Drie Kuilen Nature Reserve on 24 April) and Eastern Cape (near Oyster Bay on 2 May; two near Tsitsikamma NP on 22 May; at St. Francis Bay on 27 May; two at St. Francis Bay on 31 May–1 June; near Kei River mouth on 1 June). An immature **Saddle-billed Stork** *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis* was at Kgomo-Kgomo, North West Province, on 30 January–6 February at least; another was reported between Mokopane and Mokgopong, Limpopo, on 12 April. A **Southern Bald Ibis** *Geronticus calvus* was seen near Bronkhorstspruit, Gauteng, on 20 March. In Northern Cape, a group of seven **Fulvous Whistling Ducks** *Dendrocygna bicolor* was located in Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park on 21 April, well out of range. A **Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula* returned for its second season to Rondevlei in Wilderness, Western Cape, in late June; the status of this species in South Africa is still debated, but it may be a genuine vagrant.

An influx of **European Honey Buzzards** *Pernis apivorus* occurred throughout South Africa, with >120 records in January–April, from Limpopo (at least 11), Mpumalanga (15), KwaZulu-Natal (29), Gauteng (30), North West Province (seven), Free State (five), Northern Cape (one), Eastern Cape (four) and Western Cape (18); there was also one from 5 June, near Delmas, Mpumalanga (see also Mozambique and Namibia). A **Lappet-faced Vulture** *Torgos tracheliotos* *c.*60 km north of Loeriesfontein, Northern Cape, on 19 February was well south of its normal range. There were at least eight reports of single **Brown Snake Eagles** *Circaetus cinereus* from Western Cape and four from Eastern Cape in late January–March. A female **Bateleur** *Terathopius ecaudatus* was seen near Swellendam, Western Cape, in late May; the species is occasionally reported from the province, but is very rare. At least two **Montagu's Harriers** *Circus pygargus* were east of Tweeling, Free State, on 14 January. In Western Cape, a 'ringtail', probably a **Pallid Harrier** *C. macrourus*, was reported west of Napier, on 2 March, with another, either Pallid or Montagu's, at Vleesbaai on 29 March; both species are exceptional in the province. At least two **Western Marsh Harriers** *C. aeruginosus* were at Nylsvlei Nature Reserve, Limpopo, on 3 March. In KwaZulu-Natal, single **Dark Chanting Goshawks** *Melierax metabates* were observed in Mkhuze Game Reserve on 14 February and Zululand Rhino Reserve on 23 February. Well outside of their normal range were a **Tawny Eagle** *Aquila rapax* at Giant's Castle, KwaZulu-Natal, in early January, and a juvenile **African Hawk Eagle** *A. spilogaster* in Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, Northern Cape, on 29 April. Reports of **Ayres's Eagles** *Hieraaetus ayersii* appear to be increasing, with one over Morningside in Johannesburg, Gauteng, on 16 February, and another over Rustenburg, North West Province, on 17 February. Several **Long-crested Eagles** *Lophaetus occipitalis* were reported from Western Cape during the period, with one from Pienaarsrivier, North West Province, on 30 January.

In January–March, several **Amur Falcons** *Falco amurensis* were reported from various localities in Western Cape, whilst a flock was also seen south of Cathcart, Eastern Cape, on 25 January, with another near Reitz, Free State, on 21 March. Single **Red-footed Falcons** *F. vespertinus* were observed in Eastern Cape (south of Cathcart on 25 January; south of Graaff-Reinet on 9 February; west of Port Alfred on 10 February; near Grahamstown on 15 February), Free State (near Reitz on 21 March), Mpumalanga (near Wakkerstroom on 30 January) and Gauteng (Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve, 28 February). In Limpopo Province, a **Sooty Falcon** *F. concolor* was located near Letaba, Kruger NP, on 2 March—a very rare bird in this area. For the third consecutive season, one was present in Plettenberg Bay, Western Cape, on 1–21 April. An **African Hobby** *F. cuvierii* photographed in Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park on 2 February appears to be only the second record for Northern Cape.

A **Striped Crake** *Aenigmatolimnas marginalis* was observed at Kube Yini Private Game Reserve, near Mkhuze, on 7 March; this is only the sixth or seventh record for KwaZulu-Natal. A **Lesser Moorhen** *Gallinula angulata* foraging in a low tree near the Sani Pass border post, KwaZulu-Natal, in January, was a surprising sight. A **White-winged Flufftail** *Sarothrura ayresi* was mist-netted at Wakkerstroom, Mpumalanga, on 18 January, and another was flushed from marshy grassland at Makalali Private Nature Reserve, near Gravelotte, Limpopo, on 9 March. A **Wattled Crane** *Grus carunculatus* first seen with a flock of 13 Blue Cranes *G. paradisea* south of Devon, Mpumalanga, on 6 April, was still present on 14 June.

A **Crab Plover** *Dromas ardeola* appeared irregularly at the Gamtoos estuary, Eastern Cape, from December 2013 until at least mid February, whilst an immature was found in Richards Bay, KwaZulu-Natal, on 27 February. Two **African Oystercatchers** *Haematopus moquini* at the Mfolozi River mouth, KwaZulu-Natal, on 1–2 February were rather unexpected. A **Black-winged Pratincole** *Glareola nordmanni* at Beaufort West dam, in the Great Karoo, in early February, is one of only a handful records in Western Cape. In Eastern Cape, two **Temminck's Coursers** *Cursorius temminckii* were found near Oyster Bay on 20 June (with seven there two days later) and up to five **Burchell's Coursers** *C. rufus* at Middelburg Airfield on 21–29 June; the former appears in the area in small numbers almost annually now, but there are no previous records for the latter anywhere near this region. A **Bronze-winged Courser** *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus* was observed at Shamwari Game Reserve, Eastern Cape, on 27 April; there are few records in the province. In Western Cape, up to four **Pacific Golden Plovers** *Pluvialis fulva* were reported in late February–March, mainly at De Mond Nature Reserve, with one **American Golden Plover** *P. dominica* also there during the same period and, probably the same individual, on 16 June. At the same reserve, a **White-rumped Sandpiper** *Calidris fuscicollis*—very rare in southern Africa—was discovered on 22 February. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** *C. melanotos* was at Muzi Pan, KwaZulu-Natal, on 31 January and up to three at Strandfontein Sewage Works, Western Cape, from 23 February to 1 March. In Western Cape, a **Broad-billed Sandpiper** *C. falcinellus* was found in West Coast NP on 8–10 February and again on 5–7 April, with up to three at De Mond Nature Reserve on 23 February–29 March. In Barberspan Nature Reserve, North West Province, at least two **Eurasian Curlews** *Numenius arquata* were still present on 19 January. Southern Africa's eighth **Hudsonian Godwit** *Limosa haemastica* was at the Krom River in St. Francis Bay, Eastern Cape, on 5 February–6 March. In West Coast NP, Western Cape, two **Common Redshanks** *Tringa totanus* were present throughout the period (from late October 2013), with three there on 30 March and at least four in early June. At least two **Green Sandpipers** *T. ochropus* were in Kruger NP, Mpumalanga, in January–February. A **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* was reported from Spitskop Dam, North West Province, on 28 February. A **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus* was observed at Strandfontein Sewage Works, Western Cape, on 2–10 February, and a **Red Phalarope** *P. fulicarius* a few miles offshore from Kleinsee, Northern Cape, on 4 February.

A **Franklin's Gull** *Leucophaeus pipixcan* was at Cape Recife, Eastern Cape, on 9 May. **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** *Larus fuscus* were reported from Eastern Cape (an adult at Cape Recife, Port Elizabeth, from 25 February until at least 1 March), North West Province (an immature at Spitskop Dam on 28 February) and Gauteng (one at Korsmans Bird Sanctuary, Benoni, on 30 May–24 June). A **Gull-billed Tern** *Gelochelidon nilotica* flew around Malgas Island in Saldahna Bay, Western Cape, on 18 February. Southern Africa's sixth **Elegant Tern** *Sterna elegans* was at the roost on Bird Island in Lambert's Bay, Western Cape, on 6–9 February; it was later joined by a second individual and both remained until at least 16 February. A **Bridled Tern** *Onychoprion anaethetus* returned to the roost at Cape Recife, Eastern Cape, for its 13th season on 28 April and was still visting the area on 22 June; it was first located there on 10 April 2001. During a pelagic trip out of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, on 9 March, *c.*200 **Sooty Terns** were recorded, at least two-thirds of them immatures. No fewer than 30 were offshore from Richards Bay on 4 April, whilst one remained at the St. Lucia estuary, KwaZulu-Natal, in May–early June. A **Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger* was found in the roost at Bird Island in Lambert's Bay, Western Cape, on 27 February. In Limpopo Province, four **African Skimmers** *Rynchops flavirostris* were at the Samaria wetlands on 12 April.

An **African Mourning Dove** *Streptopelia decipiens* reported near Brits, North West Province, on 12 January was rather out of range. In Northern Cape, a **Grey Go-away-bird** *Corythaixoides concolor* near Reivilo on 4 March was unusual; there are only a handful of records for the province. A **Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* remained along the Swartrivier Road in the Overberg, Western Cape, on 12–17 January. In mid January, a **Black Cuckoo** *C. clamosus* and a **Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius* were reported from the Ashkam area, Northern Cape. An interesting record from the same province was a dead **European Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus* along the road *c.*20 km south of Philipstown in January. In KwaZulu-Natal, a male **Pennant-winged Nightjar** *C. vexillarius* was seen on a night drive at Mkhuze on 18 February, with another in Zululand Rhino Reserve in early March. Curiously, a female **African Pygmy Kingfisher** *Ispidina picta* containing an egg about to be laid, was mist-netted in arid karoo-type vegetation in the Kommadagga area, Eastern Cape, on 19 January. In KwaZulu-Natal, a **Grey-headed Kingfisher** *Halcyon leucocephala* was located in the northern Drakensberg on 14 March, well out of range. Also out of range was a **Little Bee-eater** *Merops pusillus* on the Western Cape peninsula on 28 April—apparently the first at this site. **White-fronted Bee-eaters** *M. bullockoides* were reported from Western Cape (one near Uniondale on 28 January; a few west of Ladysmith on 1 February; at least seven near Calitzdorp on 5 February) and Eastern Cape (one near Cradock on 14–15 June); there are more regular recent reports outside of the species' known range. Up to three **White-throated Bee-eaters** *M. albicollis* stayed near Crocodile Bridge in Kruger NP, Mpumalanga, in February; this is only the 15th record for southern Africa. A **Black-collared Barbet** *Lybius torquatus* along the Orange River in Upington, Northern Cape, in late May, and a **Crested Barbet** *Trachyphonus vailantii* near Cradock, Eastern Cape, on 11 January, were remarkable provincial records. Other out-of-range species around Ashkam, Northern Cape, in mid January include **Green Wood-hoopoe** *Phoeniculus purpureus*, **Grey-backed Camaroptera** *Camaroptera brevicaudata*, **Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*, **Southern Pied Babbler** *Turdoides bicolor* and **Southern White-crowned Shrike** *Eurocephalus anguitimens*.

A **Dusky Lark** *Pinarocorys nigricans* was seen near Devon, on the Mpumalanga–Gauteng border, on 14 January, with another in Phinda Private Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal, on 22 January. An **African Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla aguimp* remained at Jonkershoek, near Stellenbosch, Western Cape, from November 2012 until May at least. Southern Africa's third **Citrine Wagtail** *M. citreola* was found in Kgalagadi NP on 3–4 May. At Mabusa Nature Reserve, Mpumalanga, several **Short-tailed Pipits** *Anthus brachyurus* were still present on 25 January. A **Yellow-throated Longclaw** *Macronyx croceus* at East London, Eastern Cape, on 3 April, is the southern- and westernmost record to date. **Yellow-bellied Greenbuls** *Chlorocichla flaviventris* were reported from North West Province, in Borakalalo Nature Reserve and Sun City Resort, in early March. A **Thrush Nightingale** *Luscinia luscinia* at Adendorp, Eastern Cape, on 1–16 February, is the first for the province and the south-westernmost record for the subregion. Several remained in the Zaagkuilsdrift / Kgomo-Kgomo area, North West Province, in January–early March, with two also reported from Kruger NP, Limpopo, on 23 February.

Wing-snapping (=Ayres's) **Cisticolas** *Cisticola ayresii* calling near Plettenberg Bay on 26 January are probably only the second record for Western Cape. In March, up to ten **River Warblers** *Locustella fluviatilis* were recorded from the Zaagkuilsdrift area, North West Province, and up to seven at Rust de Winter Nature Reserve, Limpopo; on 5–6 April, a few were also encountered in Kruger NP. A **Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* in Augrabies Falls NP, Northern Cape, in mid March was a very westerly record. A **Sedge Warbler** *A. schoenobaenus*—a very rare species in Western Cape—stayed at Vermont Pan from 1 January until at least 16 March. Another was was located near Kei River mouth, Eastern Cape, on 1–3 April; there appear to be only two previous records for the province. An **Olive-tree Warbler** *Hippolais olivetorum* was in Madikwe Game Reserve, North West Province, in early March. In Eastern Cape, a **Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla* was located in a Graaff-Reinet garden on 14 January, whilst a **Garden Warbler** was mist-netted at Port Alfred on 16 March.

A **Lesser Grey Shrike** *Lanius minor* was discovered in the Overberg, Western Cape, on 25 January, with another (the same?) at Swellendam a few days earlier. A xanthocroic **Crimson-breasted Shrike** *Laniarius atrococcineus* was observed in Mokala NP, Northern Cape, on 19 February. Five **White-crested Helmetshrikes** *Prionops plumatus* were encountered in Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, Northern Cape, on 30 January, well west of the species' normal range. Remarkable records of **Red-billed Oxpeckers** *Buphagus erythrorhynchus* were made in Eastern Cape (three near Bathurst on 17 February) and Northern Cape (six along Askham road and four along Olifantshoek road from Van Zylsrus on 16 March). A **Chestnut Weaver** *Ploceus rubiginosus* was nest building in a Southern Masked Weaver *P. velatus* colony in Spitskop Nature Reserve, Upington, Northern Cape, in mid March; this is only the sixth record for South Africa. In Mpumalanga, at least one **Southern Brown-throated Weaver** *P. xanthopterus* was still present at Crocodile Bridge, Kruger NP, on 1–2 March (per *TH*). A nest of **Pink-throated Twinspot** *Hypargos margaritatus* was found at Phinda Private Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal, in April; according to the literature, only two nests have been reported previously (*AW*). On Marion Island, a small South African territory in the Indian Ocean, a **Great Reed Warbler** was noted on 12 June; this appears to be the first record for the island (per *TH*).

South Sudan

What appears to be a **Grey Crowned Crane** *Balearica regulorum* was photographed flying north over Juba on 31October 2013 (Fig. 17); this would constitute the first for South Sudan, where the congeneric Black Crowned Crane *B. pavonina* is common (*HM*).

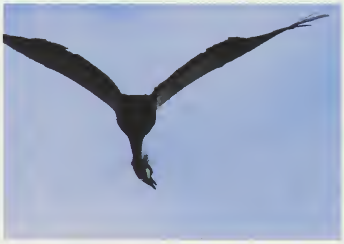


Figure 17. Grey Crowned Crane / Grue couronnée *Balearica regulorum*, Juba, South Sudan, 31 October 2013 (Henrik Mikkelsen)

Sudan

Records from January–June 2014 include the following. A flock of *c*.200 **Yellow-billed Storks** *Mycteria ibis* at Karima on 19 April was a noteworthy record so far north (*TJ*). A pair of **Hottentot Teal** *Anas hottentota* with a chick was photographed at Khartoum Sewage Ponds on 12 February, confirming that the species breeds in the country. Two **Slender-billed Gulls** *Chroicocephalus genei* at Bahri Sewage Ponds, Khartoum, on 4 April represented a rare sighting; Nikolaus (1987. *Distribution Atlas of Sudan's Birds*) mentions a single inland record, from 1980, but a few more have been noted since then. Also there on the same date, a **Clamorous Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus stentoreus* was mist-netted (Fig. 18)—a significant southerly range extension along the Nile; a week later two birds responded to playback. A weaver mist-netted at Bahri Sewage Ponds on 4 April appeared to be the first hybrid **Northern Masked** *Ploceus taeniopterus* × **Cinnamon Weaver** *P. badius* (Fig. 19); the bird was in a large colony of Northern Masked Weavers, with a male Cinnamon Weaver nearby. On 25 April a second hybrid was nest building *c*.100 m from where the first bird was caught (*TJ & MT*). Several flocks of **Village Weavers** *P. cucullatus* were observed along the Nile at Karima on 19–20 April, extending the species'

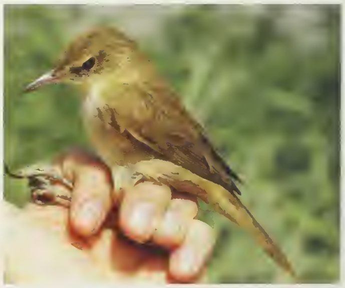


Figure 18. Clamorous Reed Warbler / Rousserole stentor *Acrocephalus stentoreus*, Bahri Sewage Ponds, Khartoum, Sudan, 4 April 2014 (Tom Jenner)

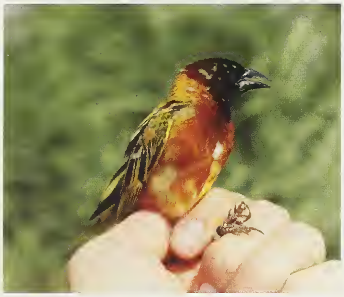


Figure 19. Hybrid Northern Masked *Ploceus taeniopterus* × Cinnamon Weaver *P. badius*, Bahri Sewage Ponds, Khartoum, Sudan, 4 April 2014 (Tom Jenner)

Hybride Tisserin du Nil *Ploceus taeniopterus* × Tisserin cannelle *P. badius*, Bahri Sewage Ponds, Khartoum, Soudan, 4 avril 2014 (Tom Jenner)

known range north by >400 km; the presence of the species so far north may perhaps explain the record of the first Village Weaver for Egypt at Abu Simbel, Lake Nasser, near the country's southern border, on 1 May 2006 (*TJ*). Between 28 February and 30 May flocks of **Wattled Starlings** *Creatophora cinera* were regularly seen at Bahri Sewage Ponds, with *c.*200, including adults in breeding plumage and recently fledged juveniles, on 12 April; this is the first breeding record in Sudan of a species previously considered a rare visitor (*TJ & MT*).

Tunisia

The first **Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes* for Tunisia was observed at a wetland near Douz on 18 March 2014 (*CBr*); details will be published in a future *Bull. ABC.* Another first, if accepted, is a **Royal Tern** *Thalasseus maximus* claimed from Djerba on 8 December 2013 (per *Dutch Birding* 36: 50). Neither species has been recorded from neighbouring Algeria, but both are known from Morocco, the former as a vagrant, the latter as an uncommon to locally common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Uganda

The following records are from the period December 2013–May 2014. A **Rufous-bellied Heron** *Ardeola rufiventris* at Doho Rice Scheme on 12 February is an unusual visitor. At Kibimba Rice Scheme, 63 **White Storks** *Ciconia ciconia* on 11 February is a significant count. Also noteworthy by recent standards was a flock of 4,550 **Lesser Flamingos** *Phoeniconaias minor* at Maseche crater lake, Kyambura Wildlife Reserve, on 22 January. An adult **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* at Kaseta village, *c.*35 km west of Hoima, on 27 May is an unusual over-summering individual. A **Lesser Spotted Eagle** *Clanga pomarina* was observed at Lusanja on 28 December. A **Red-necked Falcon** *Falco chicquera* at Lutembe on 8 January was south of its usual haunts.

At least three **Buff-spotted Flufftails** *Sarothrura elegans* were calling in the forested area of Mount Elgon in the morning of 21–22 April. At least 66 **Grey Crowned Cranes** *Balearica regulorum* left the rubbish dump at Kiteezi to roost on the electricity pylons at Luzanja on 28 December. At Doho Rice Scheme, a remarkable gathering of 34 **Greater Painted-snipes** *Rostratula benghalensis* was observed on 11 February. A **Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus* was on the shores of Lake Albert on 1 March; another, with a **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus*, was also there two days later. A count of 1,037 **Wood Sandpipers** *Tringa glareola* at Kibimba Rice Scheme on 11 February is a noteworthy total. Two **Caspian Terns** *Hydroprogne caspia* were at Lutembe on 12 March; this species has only recently become more frequent. Eight **African Skimmers** *Rynchops flavirostris* were observed on a mudflat near Entebbe on 30 April.

A **Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius* was located on the shores of Lake Albert on 22 May; the species is principally recorded in October–March, when mainly Palearctic birds are presumably involved, whilst small numbers on northbound passage in May–August are intra-African migrants. Two **Thick-billed Cuckoos** *Pachycoccyx audeberti* in Murchison Falls National Park (=NP) on 30 January probably represent only the second record for the park. At least 20 **Madagascar Bee-eaters** *Merops superciliosus* on the shores of Lake Albert on 22 May appeared to have arrived ahead of a wet weather front; the species is usually recorded in small numbers in May–November. A **Crested Barbet** *Trachyphonus vaillantii* was observed in Lake Mburo NP on 20 January; this species has only recently been recorded in Uganda.

A pair of **Red-capped Larks** *Calandrella cinerea* in likely breeding habitat at Katwe on 9 May, represents a range extension (*cf.* Carswell *et al.* 2005. *The Bird Atlas of Uganda*). An estimated one and a half million **Common Sand Martins** *Riparia riparia* were at Buliasa, on the shores of Lake Albert, on 28 January. Many hundreds of **Barn Swallows** *Hirundo rustica* above the forest at Mount Elgon on 20–21 April were late migrants; associated with them were >20 **Common House Martins** *Delichon urbicum*, 30 **European Bee-eaters** *Merops apiaster* and four **Alpine Swifts** *Tachymarptis melba*. A **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* was observed at Marabigambo grassland, Rakai District, in early February; the species is usually encountered in upland regions. At least six pairs of **Black-backed Cisticolas** *Cisticola eximius* were found in seasonally flooded grassland at Irriri on 31 January; this species has a tenuous hold in Uganda, so the range expansion is noteworthy. A pair of **Karamoja Apalises** *Apalis karamojae* was still present at Irriri on 1 February, where breeding was noted in 2011; unfortunately the thorny *Acacia* scrub has been cleared and burnt, so most of the population will presumably have moved. Two or three **Black-collared Apalises** *Oreolais pulcher* were found in the forested area of Mount Elgon on 21 April. A male **Semi-collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula semitorquata* was seen at the escarpment above Lake Albert on 3 March; there are few reliable records of this Palearctic migrant.

A male and two female **Northern Masked Weavers** *Ploceus taeniopterus* were identified in Murchison Falls NP on 30 December; if accepted, this will be the first record for Uganda, following several rejected claims. In late May, both the red-collared race *tropicus* and the all-black *concolor* of **Red-collared Widowbird** *Euplectes ardens* were found in the same grassland *c.*30 km west of Hoima. In the same area, **Brown Twinspot** *Clytospiza monteiri* and **Zebra Waxbill** *Amandava subflava* were carrying nesting material on 26 May; there are few breeding records of either species in the country. A **Grey-headed Oliveback** *Nesocharis capistrata* at Kaseta, *c.*35 km west of Hoima, represents a range extension (*RS*).

Zimbabwe

Records from December 2013–June 2014 include the following. A family party of three **Wattled Cranes** *Grus carunculatus* was at Wigeon Pan on 27 April, with another at nearby Upper Driefontein Dam (per *DR-G*). A **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* was located at Umfurudzi Park in mid March (per *TH*). **Western Marsh Harriers** *Circus aeruginosus* were observed at Marlborough Vlei, Harare, at Aberdeen Farm and Lake Manyame on 26 January. Two **Montagu's Harriers** *C. pygargus* were seen at Wigeon Pan, Gutu District, in April (per *DR-G & FM*). In January, single **Corncrakes** *Crex crex* were reported from Monavale Vlei, Wamba Dam, Dhlo Dhlo Ruins and Aiselby, whilst **Spotted Crakes** *Porzana porzana* were seen in Greengrove Nature Reserve, Harare, and at Matoa Pan in Hwange National Park (=NP), with another at Marlborough Vlei, Harare, on 9 February; both species are becoming rarer in the country (per *DR-G*). A **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* was near Nyamandhlovu Pan in Hwange NP on 25–26 March. A **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* was photographed at Green Pool, Mana Pools NP, on 3 December (per *DR-G*). A pair of **Lilian's Lovebirds** *Agapornis lilianae* was observed near Elephant Hills Safari Lodge, Victoria Falls, on 27 April; this constitutes a westward range extension. A **Lesser Cuckoo** *Cuculus poliocephalus* was reported from Gleneagles Forest Reserve, in the Eastern Highlands, on 31 January (per *TH*). Two **Pel's Fishing Owls** *Scotopelia peli* recorded at Aberfoyle, Mutasa District, is a new locality for this species, which is rare in Zimbabwe (per *DR-G & FM*). A **Basra Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus griseldis* was discovered at Marlborough Vlei on 19 January (per *TH*).

Records were collated by Ron Demey from contributions supplied by Simon Albuquerque (SA), Mohamed Amezian (MA), Vaughan Ashby / Birdfinders (VA), Brahim Bakass (BB), Rubén Barone (RB), Yaya Barry (YB), Karen Bates (KB), Simon Bates (SB), Mark Beevers (MB), Mark van Boekel (MvB), Marijke de Boer (MdB), Chris Bowden (CBo), Chris Bradshaw (CBr), Robert Burton (RBu), Nik Borrow (NB), Chris Brewster (CB), Joost Brouwer (JB), Joe Burgiel (JBu), Don Cotton (DC), Mary Crickmore (MC), Jon Dannatt (JD), Louise Dannatt (LD), Vincent Delhaye-Prat (VD-P), Robert J. Dowsett (RD), Hugues Dufourny (HD), Jean Dunleavy (JD), Karim El Haoua (KEH), Rachid El Khamlichi (REK), David Fisher (DF), Vincent Flory (VF), Trevor Ford (TF), Roger Fotso (RF), Lyn Francey (LF), Phil Gregory (PG), Trevor Hardaker (TH), Dean Hatty (DH), Vernon Head (VH), Harold Hester (HH), James Hogg (JH), Colin Jackson (CJ), Tom Jenner (TJ), Martin Kays (MK), Karim Laïdi (KL), Marc Languy (ML), Etienne Leroy (EL), Ulf Liedén (UL), Juan Antonio Lorenzo (JL), B. Maire (BM), F. Matsvimbo (FM), Henrik Mikkelsen (HM), Michael Mills / Birding Africa (MM), Guy Mirgain (GM), Mike Mockler (MMo), Jérôme Mokoko Ikonga (JM), John Newby / Sahara Conservation Fund (JN), James Kuria Ndung'u (JKN), Francis Njie (FN), Georges Olioso (GO), Bram Piot (BP), Håkan Pohlstrand (HP), Johnny Ramsden (JR), Adam Riley (AR), David Rockingham-Gill (DR-G), Otto Schmidt (OS), Lionel Sineux (LS), Ahmed Saeed Suleiman (ASS), Roger Skeen (RS), Adrian Skerrett (AS), Marwa Taha (MT), Steph Tyler (ST), Nigel Voaden (NV), Cees de Vries (CdV), Dave Waddington (DW), Spencer Watt-Pringle (SW-P), Anthony West (AW), Hans Westerlaken (HW), and from Dutch Birding, sa-rarebirdnews@googlegroups.com, www.go-south.org, http://avescanarias.blogspot.com.es/ and http://lapalmabirds.blogspot.com.es/

Contributions for Recent Reports can be sent to Ron Demey, Walter Thijsstraat 9, B-3500 Hasselt, Belgium and (preferably) by e-mail: rondemey1@gmail.com or recent_reports@africanbirdclub.org

Corrigendum
Bull. ABC 21(1)

In the paper on raptors in northern Cameroon, the Ayres's Eagle *Hieraaetus ayresii* in Fig. 22 is a juvenile, not a second-year as stated in the legend.

Obituary

Emil K. Urban: 1934–2014

Emil Urban, who died on 24 January 2014, was an expert on Ethiopia's avifauna, having gone there in 1964 to take up a teaching post at Haile Selassie University in Addis Ababa. The son of a German father who had emigrated to the States in 1927, and an American mother, he was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He gained his B.Sc. and Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, and his M.A. from the University of Kansas.

In Ethiopia he was soon collaborating with Leslie Brown, the two of them being responsible for the eventual publication of the handbook of African birds that they had so long planned. Leslie made many visits to Ethiopia, sometimes staying for weeks at a time in the Urban household. It was, Emil said, after one particularly convivial dinner in October 1966 that Leslie talked about his dream of an African handbook, to update the six volumes of Mackworth-Praed and Grant, which were based on research dating from the early 1930s. Emil said that he would be pleased to be part of the project, and in January 1967 Leslie wrote with his detailed thoughts, asking him to be the second author. During the following years plans went ahead, and many attempts were made after 1967 to try and find a publisher for the projected handbook. Emil finally returned to the States in 1975, due to political unrest, the same year Academic Press intimated that they would be interested in the project. The following year they confirmed that they would like to publish it.

Emil K. Urban (drawing by Martin Woodcock)

By then, Emil had a new workload at the Biology Department at Augusta College in Georgia, where he was to stay for the next 31 years, for the last three as the Fuller E. Callaway Professor of Biology. It was agreed that a third author was needed, and Ken Newman was co-opted, but soon found his writing assignment too great, and in June 1980 Emil and Leslie visited London to see the publishers, and invited Hilary Fry to join the team, at which event I met Emil for the first time. Within two months Leslie had died, and Emil became the senior editor for the first volume. He was joined by Hilary Fry and Stuart Keith as co-editors, and this team eventually completed the work in seven volumes, taking 24 years in the process and taking it in turns to be listed as senior editor.

Emil was Chair of the Biology Department at Augusta College 1976–2005, and in 1987 was awarded the Louis K. Bell Alumni Research Award for his work on *The Birds of Africa*; in 1997 he received the Georgia Ornithological Society's Earl R. Green Memorial award for his outstanding contributions to ornithology. He authored *A Bibliography of the Ornithology of Ethiopia* in 1970, and, with Leslie as his co-author, wrote *A Checklist of the Birds of Ethiopia*, published by Haile Selassie University Press in 1971. Over the years, he published many papers and notes about African ornithology on a wide diversity of subjects, such as mass and longevity of some Ethiopian birds, new nesting records, conservation in Ethiopia, and many papers on cranes, especially the Wattled Crane *Grus carunculata* in Ethiopia. He had been on the Advisory Board of the International Crane Foundation since 1988. Pelicans, cormorants and ibises were also a particular interest.

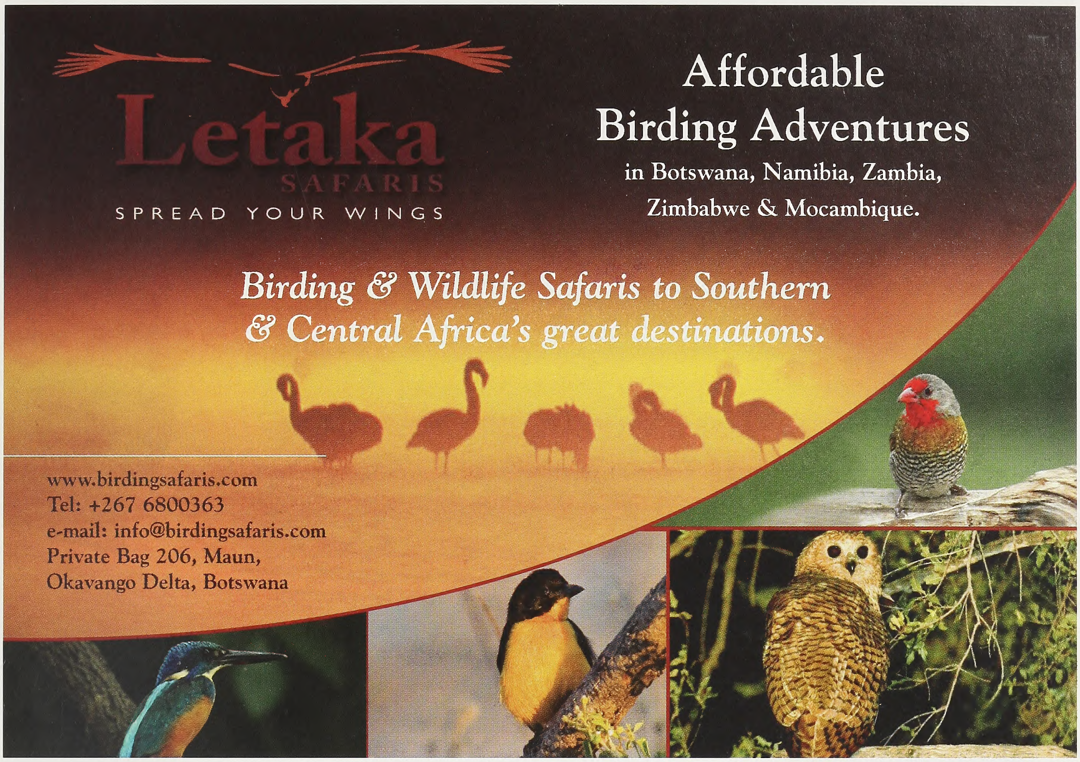
He was a very active birder in the States, and initiated the St Catherine's Island (off Georgia) Christmas Bird Count in 1987, and participated in this event every year until 2013.

During the many years we worked on *The Birds of Africa*, I came to know Emil well, as, in addition to endless correspondence, Academic Press held week-long editorial meetings in London every other year. The three editors were accompanied by their wives, and there were agreeable outings to restaurants and the theatre. However, these meetings were sometimes a little tense. After the first one, I had the idea of entertaining everyone, during the weekend beforehand, at our home in Kent, where the editors were able to indulge in unarmed combat on the croquet lawn. This became an enjoyable and valuable tradition, varied with the odd trip to Africa to attend Pan-African Ornithological Congresses.

Emil was always a delight to work with, and I had great respect for his unassuming manner and his wide knowledge and interests. He was always one for keeping fit, and told me once that he did a hundred press-ups each morning six days of the week. In a light-hearted way, I remarked "I bet you look forward to Sundays". "Sundays" he replied, "I do two hundred".

Emil leaves behind his wife Lois, whom he met at university, and married in 1963, and a daughter who was born in Ethiopia, as well as other relatives.

Martin Woodcock



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Submissions

Submissions are accepted in English or French and should be sent by e-mail to editor@africanbirdclub.org. All submissions are acknowledged. French summaries are required for all papers published in English, and vice versa. Those submitting papers should supply a summary for translation into English, or French, as appropriate. Unless a sketch map is provided as part of the article, place names should follow those on standard or readily available maps (preferably a recent edition of *The Times Atlas of the World*).

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Interested in becoming a Representative? We are seeking new Representatives in a number of countries. If you are interested in supporting and promoting ABC in your country please contact the Country Representatives' Coordinator (reps@africanbirdclub.org) attaching a CV and a statement of how you think you can develop the role. The Coordinator will be happy to provide further information if required.

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The Supporting Members scheme is a key part of the Club's strategy of encouraging the spread of knowledge and understanding of birds as widely as possible throughout Africa. The scheme enables Africans who would not otherwise have the resources to join, to become members of the Club. The scheme is funded by Supporting Members who pay a minimum of UK£30 to cover their own membership and the subscription of at least one African member. The money they contribute over and above their own subscription is placed in a special fund that is used to cover the membership expenses of African members whom they may have nominated, or who have been nominated by other Club members.

Although we have suggested a minimum of UK£30 to become a Supporting Member, any contribution is welcome. All members of the Club, even if they do not feel able to become Supporting Members themselves, are invited to nominate candidates for supported memberships. Candidates should be nationals of an African country, with a genuine interest in wild birds but without the resources to become members in their own right. Africans who think they may qualify are very welcome to put their own names forward, supported by a letter of recommendation from someone such as their employer, teacher or an officeholder in a local wildlife organisation.

The scheme now also includes clubs who wish to be affiliated with the African Bird Club in African countries where it is difficult for local individuals to become members in their own right. Clubs accepted for membership under the scheme receive up to six copies of each issue of the bulletin for circulation among their members. Instead of paying a membership fee, Clubs are asked to provide a short annual report on their activities that may be published in the bulletin. Clubs interested in becoming Affiliated Member Clubs are invited to apply to the ABC Secretary giving details of their membership, their constitution or a statement of their objectives and conditions of their membership, and their activities to date.

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ABC offers a service to help members with information requests. Perhaps you are planning a trip to Africa and need local advice, or maybe you are in search of an obscure fact about an African species. The Club does not guarantee to find all the answers but will try to help. The service is free to ABC members. Contact: Keith Betton, who is also custodian of ABC's journal library, at 8 Dukes Close, Folly Hill, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 0DR, UK. Tel: +44 1252 724068. E-mail: info@africanbirdclub.org.

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